

BEFORE THE
CALIFORNIA STATE AUDITOR
BUREAU OF STATE AUDITS

In the matter of

Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC)
Applicant Review Panel (ARP)

555 Capitol Mall, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

FRIDAY, JUNE 11, 2010
9:30 A.M.

Reported by:
Peter Petty

APPEARANCES

Members Present

Nasir Ahmadi, Chair
Mary Camacho, Vice Chair
Kerri Spano

Staff Present

Stephanie Ramirez-Ridgeway, Counsel
Diane Hamel, Executive Secretary

Also Present

Public Comment

Elizabeth Pataki
Daniel Levin
Sam Walton, NAACP
Robert Kruse
Peter Van Meter
Jim Wright

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P R O C E E D I N G S

JUNE 11, 2010 9:31 A.M.

CHAIR AHMADI: Good morning, everyone. The hour being 9:30, and the quorum present. I now call the meeting of June 11th, 2010, of the Application Review Panel to order. Secretary, would you please call the roll?

MS. HAMEL: Mr. Ahmadi - Here; Ms. Camacho - Here; Ms. Spano - Here.

ITEM 1. Approval of minutes from April 30, 2010, panel meeting

CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you so much. The first item on the agenda is Approval of the Minutes from the last meeting, April 30th of 2010. Copies of those Minutes are available in this room. Do you guys have copies of those Minutes?

MS. SPANO: Yes, I do.

CHAIR AHMADI: Do you guys have any changes or any revisions that you think we need to make to those Minutes?

MS. SPANO: I do not. I feel like it adequately reflects the record of --

CHAIR AHMADI: I agree.

MS. SPANO: -- what was discussed.

CHAIR AHMADI: Does the member of the public have any comments or questions about our Minutes from the last meeting which was April 30th of 2010? Okay, I also looked at those Minutes and I think that it accurately reflects the

1 decision that we made, or the action that we took, on April
2 30th, of 2010. I therefore move to adopt as final the Draft
3 Minutes of the April 30th, 2010 Minutes, of the Applicant
4 Review Panel.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I second that.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Any comments? Those in
7 favor, say "aye."

8 (Ayes.)

9 Those opposed? Seeing none, the Minutes are
10 adopted. Thank you.

11 **ITEM 2. Announcements**

12 CHAIR AHMADI: The second item on the Agenda is some
13 announcements that I would like to make, and please bear
14 with me, there is a lot of information that I have to share
15 with you today, and I will go one-by-one over the items
16 here. Of course, we will go over the agenda in the order
17 that they are documented on the agenda for this meeting.

18 In the Counsel's Report section, the Counsel will
19 share some reports with us, one or more reports with us, and
20 this will be the first time that you will see those reports,
21 and the Counsel will talk about the details when it comes to
22 that point. For our Internet viewers, the staff will try to
23 upload those reports onto the Internet as soon as the
24 Counsel disseminates those reports, so that those members of
25 the public who follow us on the Internet can follow along.

1 The next item that I wanted to talk about is the
2 Applicant material. The panel members have had access to
3 all the application material that is also available to the
4 public on the website. The point is that there is nothing
5 more than what is available on the Internet that the panel
6 members had, or used in their review of these applications.
7 We had over 4,500 applications and, for each application, we
8 had at least three pages of letters of recommendation. In
9 the interest of, you know, being efficient and not being
10 wasteful, we decided not to print all those applications and
11 bring to us, to this meeting, other than our own personal
12 notes. So the blue sheets that you see here are my own
13 personal notes that I will not share with anybody. And I am
14 sure that the panel members may also have brought their own
15 personal notes to help us with the discussions today.

16 I believe that the Bureau has also made available
17 laptops in the back of the room, which is connected directly
18 to our website, and any member of the public who wishes to
19 access those laptops, especially after the Counsel
20 disseminates the reports, will have a chance to do so and
21 all that information will be uploaded on the website.

22 I do not know how long this meeting will take. As
23 you can see from the Agenda, we have a lot to cover today,
24 and a big part of today's discussion is public
25 participation, and we encourage you to please share your

1 comments and if you have any questions for us as we move
2 along with today's meeting.

3 But, of course, I would like to remind everyone of
4 all the ground rules that we have. Depending on how many
5 participants we have, or how many speakers would like to
6 share thoughts or comments with us, we may decide to limit
7 the amount of time that each speaker will have to speak in
8 fairness to everybody, so that everybody has a chance to
9 share their thoughts. When the meeting ends today, the
10 Bureau staff will update the website to reflect today's
11 votes. As soon as it is practical, the Bureau staff,
12 especially the IT Unit, will try to remove all those
13 Applicants we receive a non-favorable vote today so that the
14 records are purged off of the system and it is no longer
15 public information, or available on the website. And based
16 on today's decision, the Bureau staff will also update the
17 system that we currently have to reflect the smaller group
18 of individuals who will be moved forward in this process.
19 And, again, I do not know how much time it takes, but I am
20 sure that they will do their best to get it up and running
21 as soon as possible, but it may take maybe a day or two, or
22 maybe a couple of days. So you can check the website after
23 the meeting and see when you can check that.

24 The last item under the announcements that I just
25 wanted to talk about is that the law requires the panel to

1 unanimously agree our vote on each Applicant. That applies
2 not only to the "yes" votes, or to the favorable votes, but
3 also to those who we do not think are most qualified. So,
4 since there is a requirement that we have to vote on each
5 Applicant, we cannot abstain from voting on those Applicants
6 that we do personally know. And therefore I will take a few
7 minute and ask the panel members to share the nature of any
8 relationship that they may have with any Applicants that we
9 have in the pool of 4,500 plus of them, so that, you know,
10 it is in the interest of transparency and sharing what we
11 reviewed, or those Applicants that we reviewed that we knew.
12 So at this point, I would like to ask the panel members to
13 share with the public any Applicant that you reviewed that
14 you knew personally. Or did you guys come across any
15 Applicant that you knew, personally?

16 MS. SPANO: I was aware of the name of an Applicant
17 at my prior employment. I did not work with this Applicant,
18 but I did recognize her name.

19 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Do you want to disclose the
20 name further?

21 MS. SPANO: Barbara Noble.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you. How about you,
23 Mary?

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: There was no one that I
25 recognized in the pool, that I knew.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you. I had my neighbor
2 in the pool, David Chen. And I have known David since 2005,
3 July of 2005, since I moved to this new house that we
4 bought. Our relationship is as a good neighbor, it is a
5 casual acquaintance, we say hi and bye, and talk over the
6 fence about the plants in the backyard, for example. We do
7 not have any special socializing relationship, and our wives
8 do not meet or socialize. He is busy and I am busy, too,
9 with work, so our relationship is very casual and friendly,
10 as a good neighbor should be.

11 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Just to clarify for the
12 record, I assume you never talked about Prop. 11 with your
13 neighbor?

14 CHAIR AHMADI: No, no, I have not. And to be honest
15 with you, I am sure that he is probably reviewing this
16 meeting, I do not know, but he has been very polite and very
17 respectful to the requirements of the Voters First Act, and
18 I respect that very much. In a few minutes, we will find
19 out what the votes are on all these applications, so I
20 appreciate that.

21 Next on the Agenda, well, before we move on to the
22 next item on the Agenda, does any member of the public have
23 any comments or questions at this point in time? How about
24 the panel members? Do you guys have any questions,
25 comments, any other announcement that you would like to

1 make?

2 MS. SPANO: No.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: No, okay, thank you. Yes, ma'am,
4 please. Please state your name for the record.

5 MS. PATAKI: Elizabeth Pataki. I just wanted to
6 tell you how amazed I am at the work you did, the numbers of
7 names, the material, it is amazing that you were able to
8 cover them all in the short period of time, and I want to
9 thank you for your diligence and your hard work.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you so much. I appreciate
11 that. That is encouraging.

12 **ITEM 3. Staff Report - Steven B. Russo, Bureau of State**
13 **Audits, Chief of Investigations - Report on the bureau's**
14 **findings in response to Applicant inquiries made by**
15 **panelists during initial Applicant review process, Applicant**
16 **withdrawals and disqualifications, and the bureau's**
17 **recommendations for, and proposed timeline regarding,**
18 **further investigations relating to Applicants remaining in**
19 **the Applicant pool on June 14, 2010**

20 CHAIR AHMADI: So without further delay, I would
21 like to move on to the next item on the Agenda, which is a
22 presentation by Steven Russo. Steven is our Chief of
23 Investigations at the Bureau of State Audits, and he will
24 tell us about the work that the Bureau has done and will
25 continue to do, related to the application information.

1 Steven, would you please take the podium?

2 MR. RUSSO: Can you hear me okay?

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes.

4 MR. RUSSO: Good morning, members of the Panel.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Good morning.

6 MR. RUSSO: One of the most important subject areas

7 that folks have been talking about with regard to this

8 application process has been the issue of what the Bureau is

9 going to do, what the Panel is going to do, and what we both

10 have done thus far, to try to ensure that the persons who

11 are selected to serve as members of the Citizens

12 Redistricting Commission are individuals who meet the

13 eligibility requirements for service on the Commission, set

14 forth in the Voters First Act, and that they do not have any

15 of the disqualifying conflicts of interest that are also set

16 forward in the Act. That is a fair question and I certainly

17 intend to answer that in the course of this discussion; but

18 also of particular significance is that, when people ask

19 about what the Panel is going to do, what the Bureau is

20 going to do, it is striking that folks apparently have so

21 little understanding of what the division of

22 responsibilities, what the different roles are, of the

23 Applicant Review Panel, and of the Bureau. And so, with

24 that, we have seen some confusion about why it is that

25 certain things are being done in open meetings such as this,

1 and why other things are being done by the Bureau in, I
2 think, still a transparent manner, but not in the context of
3 an open meeting as we have had today.

4 So, in answering the question about what we have
5 done to try to ensure that folks meeting the qualifications,
6 and what we are going to be doing, I would also like to talk
7 a little bit about the respective roles of the Bureau and
8 the Panel, to try to make that clear to folks. I think
9 those on the inside have a sense that there is this very
10 clear division of jurisdiction, and we often talk about
11 things happening on the Bureau side, and things happening on
12 the Panel or the ARP side of things, but I think it is time
13 now to make it clearer to the public what that division is
14 so that they will also have a better understanding of this
15 process.

16 So, in talking about what has been done to try to
17 ensure that folks meet the eligibility requirements, any
18 discussion has to begin with what those requirements are and
19 what the conflict of interest prohibitions are, so we can
20 then frame the issue. Certainly, as the Panel knows, and I
21 think now most members of the public know, to be eligible to
22 be a member of the Citizens Redistricting Commission, an
23 Applicant must be, of course, a registered voter and must
24 have been registered as a voter in the State of California
25 with the same party, or with no political party, for five

1 years prior to the date of appointment, and we anticipate
2 the date of appointment to be November 18th of this year.
3 Thirdly, an Applicant must have voted in two of the last
4 three statewide general elections. With regard to conflicts
5 of interest, an Applicant has a disqualifying conflict of
6 interest if, within the last 10 years prior to the date that
7 the person submitted their initial application, the
8 Applicant, or a member of the Applicant's immediate family
9 as done any of the following things: has been appointed to,
10 elected to, or been a candidate for Federal or State office,
11 has served as an officer, employee, or paid consultant of a
12 political party, or the campaign committee of a candidate
13 for elected Federal or State Office, has served as an
14 elected or appointed member of a political party's central
15 committee, has been registered as a Federal, State or Local
16 Lobbyist, has served as Congressional, Legislative, or State
17 Board of Equalization staff, or has contributed \$2,000 or
18 more within a year to a Congressional, State, or Local
19 candidate for elective public office. In addition, an
20 Applicant has a disqualifying conflict of interest if the
21 Applicant is staff or a consultant to, is under contract
22 with, or has an immediate family relationship with the
23 Governor, a member of the Legislature, or a member of the
24 State Board of Equalization. Now, this is a long and
25 somewhat complicated list, but we have been and continue to

1 be prepared to try to ensure that the individuals who are
2 selected to the Commission do not have any of these
3 conflicts of interest.

4 Now, as to how we do that and who has responsibility
5 for it, Government Code Section 8252, Subdivision A-2,
6 charges the Bureau - not the Panel, but the Bureau - with
7 the responsibility for performing an initial screening of
8 the Applicants prior to forwarding any applications on to
9 the Panel for the purpose of removing from the Applicant
10 pool, or excluding from the Applicant pool, anyone who does
11 not satisfy the eligibility requirements, or who has a
12 conflict of interest. I want to emphasize that this
13 screening under the law has to be performed before any
14 applications are forwarded to the panel, so it becomes a
15 part of what has been the Bureau's role in this process,
16 because it is has been the Bureau's role to initiate the
17 application process, we have done that by our establishment
18 of regulations governing the process, by creating
19 applications for this, both an initial application and a
20 supplemental application, by conducting extensive outreach
21 to try to encourage people to become Applicants for the
22 Commission, and in the course of collecting the applications
23 that we receive, of looking at those applications and
24 screening the applications so that we can weed out folks
25 lacking the eligibility requirements, and then forwarding

1 them on to the Panel, so that it is then the Panel's
2 obligation at the point that the Bureau has forwarded the
3 application materials on, to then take that Applicant pool
4 that the Bureau has established, and then, having
5 jurisdiction over that Applicant pool, to at that point go
6 through the applications, as you have done, to ultimately
7 identify 60 of the most qualified Applicants, and in the
8 course of doing that, exercising your responsibilities, to
9 also look to determine whether someone has a disqualifying
10 conflict of interest, or otherwise is ineligible to serve.
11 The Bureau has maintained responsibility as an organization
12 that is ready, willing, and able to assist the Applicant
13 Review Panel by certainly collecting information for the
14 Panel and forwarding that information along, and trying to
15 answer questions that the Panel may have about Applicants,
16 contacting them, being the go-between, and so forth, to
17 assist them, but ultimately with the applications forwarded
18 on to the Panel, it is now and has been since we forwarded
19 those applications along, the Panel's responsibility and
20 jurisdiction to determine who stays and who goes from the
21 Applicant pool, and it is only now that those folks are in
22 the Applicant pool, that they can only be removed by three
23 votes, by the unanimous votes, of you as Panel members.

24 Now, talking a little bit about what we have done in
25 the past to try and ensure that the members of the Applicant

1 pool meet the eligibility requirements and do not have
2 conflicts of interest. The first thing that the Bureau did
3 was what it did in crafting the initial application for
4 Applicants to complete to move into the application process.
5 In the course of doing that, we designed an initial
6 application that focused on whether or not folks met the
7 eligibility requirements, and whether or not they had a
8 conflict of interest. We required Applicants to go through
9 all of the points regarding eligibility about being a
10 registered voter, about having not changed party affiliation
11 within the last five years, and so forth, and asked
12 questions about whether or not they have any disqualifying
13 conflict of interest. And in collecting those answers, we
14 forced people to kind of go through and examine themselves
15 and determine whether or not they are indeed eligible to
16 serve. In the course of doing that, we found that we were
17 quite successful in weeding folks out, at least initially,
18 from the application process. Of the 31,000 individuals who
19 completed the initial application, approximately 6,000 of
20 those individuals disqualified themselves, weeded themselves
21 out of the process, through their answers to the questions,
22 and by those answers indicating that they either were not
23 eligible to serve, or that they had a disqualifying conflict
24 of interest. This, then, left us with what was initially an
25 Applicant pool of 25,000 individuals. Now, of course, in

1 talking about this, some people who completed their
2 applications made some mistakes, they would check boxes
3 regarding a relationship just by mistake, they would
4 accidentally check the wrong box, or they would provide some
5 information, thinking that maybe a family member may have
6 engaged in some sort of disqualifying activity within the
7 last 10 years, but then, you know, after they received a
8 disqualification notice, then they looked in to it further
9 and found that maybe that family member's activity occurred
10 more than 10 years in the past, and therefore it was not
11 disqualifying. So, finding that some individuals made
12 mistakes, we had a process of reconsideration. It was not
13 possible for anyone to go back onto his or her own
14 application and just change an answer, like, "Well, I'm
15 disqualified, so I'm going to change that answer, now I'm
16 qualified." We were wise to any issues there. So in order
17 for anyone to change an answer on the initial application
18 that would affect their eligibility, we required that they
19 go through a careful reconsideration process where they had
20 to contact us, they had to complete a form, and in
21 completing that form, they had to tell us what they answered
22 wrong on the initial application, and they had to affirm
23 that they were providing new information that was correct
24 information. And we asked them to cite to any sources of
25 information that we could look to, to confirm that what they

1 were telling us now was the truth, what they told us before
2 was an error. Only by going through that process, then, did
3 we grant some people reconsideration of the decision, and
4 allowed them into the initial Applicant pool. Again, all of
5 this was done on the Bureau's side of things, well before
6 the Applicant Review Panel had even convened the meeting.
7 But we were mindful that this had to be a transparent
8 process. So, in the course of allowing people this
9 reconsideration, anyone requesting reconsideration had to
10 fill out a form, that form then came to us at the Bureau
11 side, we reviewed that form, did whatever checking we could,
12 and then we issued a decision to say yes or no as to whether
13 that person would be allowed into the Applicant pool. Once
14 the decision was made and someone was allowed back into the
15 Applicant pool, that information was posted along with the
16 person's application on our website, our We Draw the Lines
17 website, so that anyone having any questions or concerns
18 about why someone was in the Applicant pool could see their
19 original application, could see the request for
20 reconsideration, and could see the decision to let that
21 person into the Applicant pool. So this would be an
22 entirely transparent process.

23 Next in this process, we of course had the second
24 part of the application process, which are the application,
25 which was the Supplemental Application. And we similarly

1 wanted to make sure that the Supplemental Application would
2 be a vehicle by which individual could be weeded out if they
3 had a disqualifying conflict of interest. Now, we already
4 asked questions about the folks' eligibility and so forth,
5 but in the Supplemental Application, we really wanted to
6 focus on those immediate family relationships, and we did
7 that because we knew, of all the disqualifying factors that
8 would be at play, that that would be somewhat more
9 complicated in that there were certain requirements built
10 into the law as far as which family members could disqualify
11 you, and what your relationship had to be, and then what
12 their activities were during the 10-year period. So we set
13 up the Supplemental Application so that Applicants were
14 required to list all of the persons who had a family, a
15 legal or blood family relationship that could potentially
16 cause disqualification. With that, then, we asked them to
17 list for those individuals whether they engaged in any of
18 the activities on this list that I went through earlier,
19 that could cause the Applicant to be disqualified, such as
20 having been a lobbyist, having contributed \$2,000 or more to
21 a political campaign, and so forth. And then, finally, we
22 asked about whether or not the individual had a special or a
23 bona fide relationship with that person, and only if the
24 person with the family member you had a bona fide
25 relationship, and that person engaged in one of those

1 conflict of interest activities, would the Applicant be
2 disqualified. Well, in fact, and again, we did this because
3 we really wanted to make sure that people gave a lot of
4 thought to this, that they looked at the issue, that they
5 considered each individual family member, and affirmed for
6 us what those answers were. Interestingly, we did not have
7 a large number of individuals disqualify themselves in going
8 through this process, which I think indicates that people
9 were actually quite thoughtful in filling out the initial
10 application, but we had some, and so if we found that people
11 were in fact answering that they did have family members
12 with whom they had a bona fide relationship, who had engaged
13 in these prohibited activities, they were automatically
14 disqualified from, or excluded from, is another way of
15 saying it, the Applicant pool. In this way, we were
16 furthering our efforts to try to ensure that only people in
17 the Applicant pool were eligible to serve. Now, admittedly,
18 just as during the initial application process, there were
19 some individuals who made some errors in completing the
20 Supplemental Application, just a handful, but these
21 individuals, again, answered questions about their family
22 members and maybe after answering the questions discovered
23 that what they thought was a prohibited activity occurring
24 in 10 years, happened prior to that, or misunderstood some
25 of the instructions about who they had a bona fide

1 relationship with, and who they did not. But, once again,
2 just as with the initial application, an Applicant could not
3 just go back to his or her application and change the
4 answers to become qualified. We required the Applicants to
5 go through the reconsideration process, to tell us what
6 mistake they made, to affirm for us what the correct
7 information was, and to cite any sources of information that
8 we could look to, to try to confirm whether or not they were
9 indeed eligible. If we granted someone reconsideration
10 based on what they provided to us, then, once again, along
11 with that person's application on the Internet, you would
12 see the Request for Consideration and you would see the
13 decision on that request to let them back into the Applicant
14 pool. Significant about this, and why it was so important
15 to have this kind of transparency, was not just so that
16 individuals could see what we were doing and know that this
17 was, indeed, an honest and fair process, but also because we
18 wanted that information out there for purposes of public
19 comment. Throughout this application process, we had been
20 encouraging people throughout California to examine these
21 applications and to examine the information provided with
22 those applications, and if they have some information that
23 indicates that what is being told to us is not true, to
24 bring that information forward, to let us know through their
25 ability to make public comment, so that we can look into the

1 matter further and make sure that the individuals in the
2 Applicant pool, indeed, are entitled to be there.

3 Now, through this process, again, we were talking
4 about things that have been happening on the Bureau side
5 before the Applicant Review Panel has been involved. When
6 we went through the Supplemental Application process, we
7 went from talking about approximately 25,000 applications,
8 and we found that, in the course, then, of going through the
9 Supplemental Application process, completing that process to
10 the deadline, that we ended up with approximately 4,500
11 completed Supplemental Applications, a completed
12 Supplemental Application being a completed application form,
13 along with three letters of recommendation. Now, once we
14 acquired - on the Bureau side - acquired these Supplemental
15 Applications, at the conclusion of the Supplemental
16 Application period, at that point, we forwarded the
17 application materials along to the Applicant Review Panel.
18 Now, I have heard some folks mention the fact that, "Wow,
19 you went from 25,000 applications to 4,500 applications, and
20 so you have eliminated all these people from the Applicant
21 pool, and you never had a public meeting about it, and what
22 are you doing? That is not transparent, and that is not
23 consistent with the regulations." And that is a
24 misunderstanding of the process. What we did on the Bureau
25 side is we collected applications, and in collecting those

1 applications, what we had to collect was an initial
2 application, a Supplemental Application, and three letters
3 of recommendation, and that is what we did, we collected
4 people, we collected those applications, and created an
5 Applicant pool which we called, now, the Supplemental
6 Applicant Pool, and passed that along to the Applicant
7 Review Panel. We did not, in the course of doing that, we
8 were not excluding anyone, we were actually including
9 people, but we could only include the people who submitted
10 applications. We could not include people who only
11 completed an initial application, but not a Supplemental, we
12 could not include people who completed an initial and a
13 supplemental, but did not give us the letters of
14 recommendation. We could only include those people that
15 completed and provided a complete Supplemental Application
16 packet and, in fact, that is what we did.

17 Now, as we gathered those applications together, we
18 found that there were some people who took advantage of an
19 opportunity that we provided to be included in the pool of
20 Applicants, based on the fact that there was some sort of
21 error in the process of collecting the application, that we
22 found that there were some computer glitches in the sense
23 that people had to submit their applications online, and
24 that, in the course of submitting their applications online,
25 they had the ability to go back into their applications

1 throughout the application period, and make changes up until
2 the deadline, that in the course of putting their
3 application materials that sometimes where were certain
4 computer problems where they did not get it submitted, they
5 did not hit the "submit" button, or it did not go through as
6 anticipated, and we worked with them to find out kind of
7 what the problems were, and so forth, or similarly whether
8 any letters of recommendation had gotten lost in the mail,
9 or had gotten garbled in fax transmission, or whatever. And
10 so, as we had done throughout the process, we went through a
11 reconsideration process with them where we tried to find out
12 what the problem was, to make sure that they affirmed for us
13 the truth of what was happening, what the problem was in
14 getting the application through, and what they had done to
15 correct the problem, and letting them through the process.
16 A few individuals came into the process that way. Again,
17 this was not an exclusion process, this was an inclusion
18 process, and this was a process of making sure that everyone
19 who submitted an application, that met the eligibility
20 requirements, was let into the application pool so that they
21 could be considered by you, along with the other Applicants.

22 Now, the submission of the applications to the
23 Applicant Review Panel really is the watershed moment in
24 this process because that is the point at which, and what I
25 have been talking about, responsibility for this process

1 moved from the Bureau side of things, which on the Bureau
2 side of thing is setting up a process, collecting
3 applications, and creating this pool of Applicants, and then
4 forwarding it on to the Applicant Review Panel. With that
5 forwarding of applications, then the responsibility, the
6 jurisdiction over the applications, became vested in the
7 Applicant Review Panel so that, in order to be eliminated
8 from the Applicant pool, from this 4,500 plus pool, you have
9 to have those three affirmative votes. Now, some folks have
10 been rather surprised because, in the course of going
11 through this application process, some folks have wanted to
12 and have decided, "You know, I really don't think I want to
13 be on the Commission, after all, so I want to withdraw."
14 And so long as we were pulling together the Applicant pool,
15 then they would make the request to withdraw, we would
16 withdraw them and we would certainly make sure we documented
17 it, and so forth, because, again, it is very important to us
18 to make sure that anyone looking at this process can see
19 what we did and why we did it. But once we forwarded
20 applications to the Applicant Review Panel, it has been our
21 position that we have no ability on the Bureau side to
22 eliminate anyone from the Applicant pool because that
23 responsibility now rests with you. So, individuals wanting
24 to withdraw, what we are doing on the Bureau side is we are
25 providing that information to the panel, so that it is the

1 panel's decision, now, what happens because we are
2 maintaining fidelity to what we put in, what is in the Act,
3 and what we put into the regulations, that no one can be
4 removed without the affirmative vote of three panel members.

5 Now, in a related issue, since applications have
6 been submitted to the Panel, certain questions have arisen
7 about whether certain individuals, based on what they have
8 answered in their applications, whether or not those
9 individuals may have a conflict of interest that was not
10 disclosed, and certainly pouring through the applications,
11 certain issues have come up. Applicants, as an example,
12 might say, "Well, back when I was a Lobbyist, I obtained
13 this great experience doing X, Y and Z." And the funny
14 thing, they will put that in the application, but they will
15 not say when they were serving as a Lobbyist. Well, if it
16 was within the last 10 years, there is a conflict of
17 interest and that person should not be in the pool; if it
18 was 15 years ago, you know, fine, it means whatever it
19 means, but it certainly does not mean that the person should
20 be disqualified. So what has been happening is that, when a
21 member of the Panel develops a question based on something
22 contained in an application that indicates someone may have
23 a conflict of interest, or may not meet eligibility
24 requirements, then the panel, through their legal counsel,
25 has provided requests for information from the Bureau, and

1 that is where the Bureau's responsibility still exists,
2 because there, if we receive a request for information from
3 the Panel, what we then have been doing is trying to find
4 out the answer to the question; in the example that I gave,
5 does Applicant Smith have a disqualifying conflict of
6 interest because of serving as a Registered Lobbyist, and so
7 then we would take that question, it would come to me, I
8 would assign it to staff, staff would then look at, "Okay,
9 let's check the list, is this person listed as a Registered
10 Lobbyist? And let's talk to the Applicant and let's find
11 out what the Applicant has to say." In most instances where
12 these kinds of issues have come up, we have been able to
13 confirm that, in fact, there is not a problem. There have
14 been some instances, however, where we have found
15 individuals have a disqualifying conflict of interest maybe
16 because of an appointment to a State Office, or so forth.

17 What we are doing in this process is, after we
18 obtain whatever the information is about an Applicant, then
19 that information is put into a report, which I generate;
20 that report is then passed along to Panel counsel and,
21 ultimately, onto the members of the Panel. Often times, if
22 we find there is a disqualifying conflict of interest, then
23 we might make a recommendation to the panel that they
24 exclude someone from the Applicant pool because of a
25 disqualifying conflict of interest. But that is the Panel's

1 decision. And, with that report, we take that report and we
2 put it on the Internet so that any member of the public can
3 look at the Applicant's application materials, the initial
4 application, the Supplemental application, and the letters
5 of recommendation, but they would also see this report
6 generated by the Bureau saying that we have looked into this
7 individual, we have been provided with this information
8 about the individual, that this individual has been a
9 Lobbyist in the last 10 years, and we recommend the person
10 be removed from the Applicant pool; or, we have looked into
11 this at the request of the Panel and we have found that the
12 person was a Lobbyist, but the person was a Lobbyist more
13 than 10 years ago, therefore it is not a disqualifying
14 conflict of interest, and so the Panel should consider it
15 for whatever worth it has.

16 Through this method, we have been trying, again, to
17 provide full support to the Applicant Review Panel in
18 providing them with the information that they need, but
19 doing it in a transparent manner so that it is not a
20 situation where Panel members are secretly conducting
21 investigations or asking their friends if they know this
22 Applicant, or what dirt they may have on someone, that, in
23 fact, the information is being requested by the Panel, is
24 being run through channels on the Bureau's side, and a fully
25 transparent, public report is being issued regarding that

1 individual. Through this process, we are trying to also
2 make sure that there is always fairness, that if we obtain
3 some information that may indicate that an individual has a
4 disqualifying conflict of interest, or that there is some
5 information about that individual that may be of interest to
6 the panel, maybe it is information that could arguably
7 affect impartiality and so forth, that we contact the
8 Applicant and give the Applicant an opportunity to respond
9 to what we have found, so that if that Applicant has
10 contrary information, then they can bring that forward. And
11 I would note as an aside that this is consistent, too, with
12 the way we have been operating the public comment process,
13 where if we receive a public comment about someone, that
14 rather than just forwarding that information along to the
15 Applicant Review Panel, what we do is that we automatically
16 contact the Applicant about whom the comment is being made,
17 and we provide that Applicant an opportunity to respond to
18 the comment. Now, in most instances, the comments have been
19 positive. I think that, in a lot of instances, folks are
20 asking their friends to say nice things about them, which is
21 certainly allowed in the application process. How valuable
22 that is, that is up to you, but the important part about
23 this function is that, when we have received comments that
24 are negative about an Applicant, about affecting that
25 person's ability to do the job, or honesty, or so forth,

1 that then the Applicant has an opportunity to write a
2 response to that and, in instances where we can find that
3 there is absolutely no shred of credibility to the comment,
4 then we simply do not post it and we do not move it forward,
5 and that is permitted under our regulations. But if it is a
6 judgment call, it is "he said, she said," we forward the
7 information along to the Applicant Review Panel so that the
8 Applicant Review Panel has both sides of the story, the
9 Applicant's side, has the commenter's side, and again, it is
10 all on the Internet so that anyone who wants to see what
11 information is being provided to the Panel and wants to
12 provide additional information on that subject, that they
13 can do so through their own public comment.

14 Now, having gone with that aside, the issue of
15 providing information to the Panel on a case-by-case basis
16 is something that we continue to be committed to in the
17 course of providing information not just about - and I
18 think, as we go along through the process, I expect that it
19 will not just be about whether or not someone has a conflict
20 of interest, but may very well be issues regarding their
21 relative qualifications as to other candidates, so that if
22 an Applicant talks about his or her service with a
23 particular group, a particular work experience, a particular
24 experience in a volunteer capacity, or so forth, and it is
25 unclear to the Panel exactly what that means, exactly what

1 that experience is about, that the Panel can in turn
2 generate questions to the Bureau, and the Bureau can try to
3 provide more information on those issues. Obviously, like
4 anyone else, we have limited resources, you know, in terms
5 of what we can respond to, but certainly important questions
6 that are very significant questions for the panel to have
7 looked into in making your decisions, of course, we are
8 available to provide that kind of support, keeping in mind
9 that what we are doing is going to be absolutely transparent
10 and the Applicant will have a full opportunity to respond to
11 any information that we uncover.

12 Now, in addition to responding to Panel requests for
13 information, we have also embarked on an effort to try to
14 proactively look into issues of eligibility and conflicts of
15 interest, and specifically on that issue, we have requested
16 voter registration information from the Secretary of State's
17 Office, and we have obtained that, and what we have been
18 doing is we have been checking all of the Applicants against
19 the voter registration, voting history information that is
20 maintained by the Secretary of State's Office to ensure that
21 individuals meet those eligibility requirements of being
22 registered voters, registered with same party or no party
23 for five years, voting in two of the last three statewide
24 elections. We have gone through that information and what
25 we are also now doing is comparing that information to

1 information that we received from the counties, so that we
2 have two sources of information here to try to confirm the
3 eligibility of individuals to serve. Thus far, through this
4 process, we have confirmed approximately 3,500 Applicants as
5 being eligible under those criteria, we have found 17 to be
6 ineligible, and we are still working on the verification
7 process through the counties because getting information
8 from the counties has not been as easy for us as getting
9 information from the Secretary of State's Office, we are
10 looking at 58 different entities, but pulling that
11 information together to ensure that the individuals who are
12 in the Applicant pool and ultimately are selected to the
13 Commission meet these eligibility requirements. We have
14 also been checking individuals against the list of persons
15 appointed by the Governor and members of the Legislature to
16 State offices, and through that process we have confirmed 14
17 people to be ineligible. And we have been checking the
18 names of the Applicants against lists of persons registered
19 as Federal, State and Local Lobbyists. Thus far, we have
20 not found anyone to be disqualified on that basis. And we
21 are continuing this process. As we continue to look to find
22 sources of information, to confirm against the eligibility,
23 the conflict of interest requirements, certainly as the
24 Panel narrows the Applicant pool, we anticipate that our
25 work will become easier, simply we will have fewer

1 Applicants to have to deal with, and I think that is what
2 you will see throughout this process; as the pool narrows,
3 the level of scrutiny will increase. And I will talk about
4 that as I go through this.

5 As to what the Bureau intends to do moving forward,
6 again, we are going to continue to go forward with
7 confirming voter eligibility requirements, and checking
8 names against lists of appointees, against lists of
9 lobbyists. Again, at the State level, it is easier, at the
10 local level, it is more difficult. We are talking about all
11 these different bodies that exist. But we will be
12 proactively seeking information from the political parties
13 because, you know, individuals who serve on central
14 committees, individuals who would serve as employees of
15 political parties, are disqualified, have a disqualifying
16 conflict of interest, so we are going to be looking at that.
17 And we will be seeking information regarding paid
18 Congressional Legislative Board of Equalization staff. And
19 we will be seeking information regarding political
20 contributions. A lot of political contribution information
21 is available through the Secretary of State's Office, at
22 least for State candidates and committees, and information
23 at the local level requires a more localized search, but we
24 are in the process of doing that. And, as we move through
25 this process, we are checking this information not just for

1 the Applicants, but for the members of their immediate
2 family. But, as I mentioned, we anticipate that, as the
3 Applicant pool becomes more narrowed through the work of the
4 Panel that the level of scrutiny will increase. And
5 specifically, what we are pointing to is the point in time
6 when the Panel identifies the 120 Applicants to be
7 interviewed. When that happens, we anticipate going through
8 each application and looking specifically for issues of
9 eligibility and issues of conflict of interest, and
10 particularly those areas that we were not able to confirm or
11 were not able to provide enough information - obtain enough
12 information about when we were doing a generalized search
13 for information regarding a larger pool. Of course, as a
14 part of doing this kind of search, this kind of a background
15 sort of search regarding the 120, we will be going to what
16 you would anticipate to be all the usual sources of
17 information, we would be doing things like the obvious thing
18 of *Googling* these individuals, looking for *Facebook* pages,
19 looking for *My Space* pages, anything that would give us a
20 picture of that person that would be helpful to the Panel in
21 making a determination, particularly on the issue - and we
22 understand - particularly on the issue of impartiality
23 because we know that is crucial, happens to be a crucial
24 consideration for the Applicant review panel in determining
25 who should move forward in the process. But, as I have

1 talked about throughout, we intend - this will be a
2 transparent process and we intend it to be a fair process.
3 Any information we obtain regarding an Applicant will be
4 placed in a written report when it is transmitted to the
5 Applicant review panel, and the information that is
6 transmitted will be shared with the Applicant so the
7 Applicant has an opportunity to respond to any information,
8 and the information will be available on the Internet for
9 the public to see, so they know precisely what information
10 the Applicant Review Panel has, just as they know now what
11 is in those applications, and what is in those letters of
12 recommendation, they will have access to this information
13 and, if the public out there, and we are relying on their
14 eyes and ears, and we are relying on their information, if
15 they have information that whatever we are providing to the
16 Applicant Review Panel is not correct, or is missing some
17 vital point, that they can chime in, let us know what it is,
18 and we will do our best to make sure that that information
19 is looked into, as well, so that the Applicant Review Panel
20 has the best information that it can have to make these
21 important decisions that it has to make. So, that is what
22 the Bureau is doing and that is how the Bureau is working
23 with the Applicant Review Panel to try to make sure that the
24 individuals selected to the Commission are indeed eligible
25 to serve, that they do not have conflicts of interest, and

1 that the information they are providing in their
2 applications is correct information on which the Panel can
3 rely in making these decisions. I am not going to tell you
4 this is going to be a perfect process, I cannot tell you
5 that any examination into someone's background, into
6 someone's eligibility, is going to be a perfect process; but
7 what I can assure you is that we are going to do our level
8 best and apply the resources that we have, the resources
9 that we can, and we certainly have folks at the Bureau who
10 are experienced in conducting investigative work, to make
11 sure that you have the best information available. And with
12 that, I think my presentation is over.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, Steven.

14 MR. RUSSO: I am certainly willing to take
15 questions.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you so much. I just wanted to
17 take advantage of this opportunity and also thank you and
18 your staff for helping us in this process. I know I sent
19 you a lot of questions where I was suspicious or found
20 discrepancies between responses and marking on the
21 applications, for example, through our counsel, and the
22 information that you provided to us and the Panel members
23 have been great, and I appreciate that. Thank you so much.

24 MR. RUSSO: Thank you.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Does any of the Panel members have

1 any questions for Mr. Russo?

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes, I do. Steven, in the
3 sense of this Voter Registration information checks on the
4 application, when do you think your staff will be completed
5 with that check?

6 MR. RUSSO: It depends somewhat on the counties,
7 quite frankly. It depends on the counties providing us with
8 information. So I cannot give you a date at this point, but
9 what I can tell you is that, as we go through the process,
10 and as we narrow down to a much smaller pool when we are
11 looking at ultimately having only 120, that when we get to
12 that level, if it is necessary to individually visit a
13 county, to try to get information, then that maybe will be
14 what we will have to do, we hope it does not come to that,
15 but we certainly understand that, when it comes to those
16 crucial issues, that we have to apply whatever resources we
17 can to making sure that folks are eligible. So I think what
18 you will see is information provided to you when we have the
19 information, with an assurance that, when you are in the
20 process of making your final selection, you will have the
21 information that you need to ensure that the folks that are
22 selected have eligibility.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: With the information that came
24 from the State, has that already been looked at now, it is
25 just the County that you are -

1 MR. RUSSO: It has because what we found is there
2 are instances where information from the State may show a
3 discrepancy, and so what we need to make sure is that those
4 records are accurate, and so we are trying to confirm that
5 against the County information, and where there is an issue,
6 then a discrepancy between the two of them, what we will do,
7 what we have done, and what we will do is contact the
8 Applicant and say, "It looks like there's a problem here,
9 can you provide us with any information to indicate that you
10 meet the voter registration requirements?" And if they
11 cannot do it, then you receive a recommendation from us of
12 disqualification; if they can resolve the issue, then it is
13 resolved and they move forward.

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: With the immediate family, I
15 noticed when I was looking through some that individuals
16 might not have listed family members, any family members,
17 because they misinterpreted maybe what they were supposed to
18 report. I know that you are looking at the Governor
19 appointees and all these in the sense of family information,
20 is that just the family members that they have listed on
21 their Supplemental Application?

22 MR. RUSSO: Well, that is - for me, that is two
23 questions when we talk about that, one is the issue of folks
24 listing all of their family members, and indeed, early on in
25 the process we had an issue, we had folks who became

1 confused by the application, even though we thought it was
2 pretty clear, but people can read things differently as to
3 whether or not they needed to list all of their family
4 members. And so, when we saw individuals early on who were
5 not listing family members, then we reached out to those
6 individuals to say, "Do you really have no family members at
7 all? No sisters, no brothers, no children, no parents,"
8 whatever, and created a system with the Supplemental
9 Application where folks could add family members because we
10 found a number of people had simply misunderstood the
11 question, that where, in the course of going through the
12 Supplemental Applications, where we found instances where
13 someone will make reference to a family member, but we look
14 on the family member part of the application and there is
15 not a family member - that family member is not listed -
16 then we have gone back to the Applicant and said, "There's a
17 discrepancy on your application, it looks like you have a
18 wife you didn't list," and are you hiding someone? And so
19 then they will say, "Oh, gee, I didn't understand," or, "I
20 made a mistake," or whatever, and we get the information and
21 we have them amend their application to provide that
22 information in order to move forward with the process. Now,
23 at this point when you are talking about what are we trying
24 to confirm, at this point we can only confirm what we know,
25 which is we can look at the family members that are listed.

1 When we get down into, again, to smaller pools because, you
2 know, at this point, quite frankly, when we are dealing with
3 4,500 people, that is a lot of people, that as we get into
4 smaller pools, and I think where we are seeing things that
5 do not look right where we are having someone who says, you
6 know, he or she has no family members, you know, we are
7 probably going to - I would anticipate we will contact those
8 folks and just confirm that information because that, by
9 itself, it is not unheard of, it is certainly not
10 impossible, but it raises a flag to look at that. But if
11 someone has, you know, a sister or brother that is left off
12 of the application, and we do not know about it, you know,
13 when we get into that 120, that is certainly something we
14 are going to be looking for. But in the mean time, we
15 certainly encourage - I want to hit that drum - we encourage
16 members of the public looking at these applications, if they
17 think an Applicant is missing family members, to please come
18 forward and let us know, and we certainly encourage
19 Applicants that, if you look at your application, if it
20 looks like going through that application you think you made
21 a mistake, and you find that you forgot to list a family
22 member, that it is real important at this point to submit an
23 amendment to that application so we would have that
24 information.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Thanks again, Steven. Kerri, do you

1 have any questions?

2 MS. SPANO: Yeah, I do. For those Applicants who
3 actually write in their application somewhere that they
4 inadvertently maybe checked the wrong political party, does
5 the Bureau have a mechanism in place to capture that in the
6 form, as I have not really seen that change.

7 MR. RUSSO: We are aware of that being an issue and
8 what we are doing at this point is we are encouraging
9 individuals to contact us if that is an issue, and then what
10 we would be doing is, with their consent, making a change to
11 their application so that the correct political party is
12 listed. I mean, throughout this process what we have been
13 trying to do is to tell people, if you make a mistake at any
14 point, if at any point you discover the information in your
15 application is not entirely correct, maybe it is because you
16 checked the wrong box, maybe it is because you got an
17 address wrong, maybe it is because, you know, you got some
18 years wrong on dates of things, or what have you, whatever
19 the information is, then contact us, let us know that, and
20 we will encourage you to file an amendment to your
21 application. So what you will often see with some
22 applications is that kind of information, either in some
23 instances on the Supplemental Application, it will be listed
24 under "Other Information," and they will say, "Well, I got
25 my party affiliation wrong on the initial application." And

1 maybe it will appear as an amendment. So the information is
2 there. Where there is a problem is in compiling the
3 statistics because the statistics that we compile as far as
4 ethnicity, voter registration, and so forth, is compiled off
5 the initial application, so where people checked boxes. So
6 we have been reluctant to make any changes to an application
7 because apparently what we are getting as feedback from the
8 Panel is that you really want to make sure that the
9 statistical information is as accurate as possible. Then,
10 what we have done is we have instituted a process whereby
11 Applicants who have made those kinds of mistakes will
12 contact us and we will, with their consent, we can go in and
13 make the change to the application so that the application
14 reflects the correct party affiliation, county, and so
15 forth, those statistical boxes, and that then the numbers
16 that are generated for your statistics are accurate.

17 MS. SPANO: I have another question. You mentioned
18 earlier that the Bureau plans to do *Google* searches and
19 further research on these Applicants after the 120 is
20 determined. Is it possible, as we are winding down the
21 pool, we determine after today those that we want to push
22 forward, through, is there a way that the Bureau can assist
23 us in doing research on these applications if they cite,
24 say, web preferences, or of an article they wrote, or a
25 book, or something that pertains to a response in one of

1 their essay responses?

2 MR. RUSSO: Absolutely. And going back to something
3 I said earlier, that we are committed to being responsive to
4 the Panel in providing you the information that you feel you
5 need in order to make the decisions. So, if in the course
6 of reviewing an application, and there is something in that
7 application that causes you some concern, or that just
8 leaves you with questions, or you are saying, you know, that
9 this Applicant looks like he or she has some really good
10 qualifications, but I am not sure what exactly this person
11 says he or she wrote a book about the importance of
12 diversity, and so I want to know whether that book really -
13 is it pro diversity, con diversity, is it good? Is it a
14 coloring book, or is it something scholarly? And you want
15 to know about that, then make a request through Counsel and
16 we will provide information. The only caveat on that, of
17 course, is that we do not have a cast of thousands working
18 in the background to look into stuff, so we would appreciate
19 some judiciousness in the request that you receive, that it
20 really is important to you, and then we will do what we can,
21 and if there is an issue, then we will certainly -- with
22 resources -- then we will certainly let you know and do
23 everything we can to make sure that you have the information
24 you need.

25 MS. SPANO: And also, is there a plan to do any

1 verification of employment history or job history that would
2 evolve or unnecessary for us?

3 MR. RUSSO: I think for our purposes that is
4 something we are going to be looking at with the 120 stage.
5 You know, and I am focusing on the 120 stage, that is not
6 written - cast in granite - but the issue really is what
7 numbers you reach and when, because the 120 is something
8 that we feel like we can handle because, even though that
9 will be a large task because, with 120 Applicants and you
10 start multiplying that by how many family members they have,
11 and the issues about how many jobs they had, and trying to
12 verify each piece of information would in itself be a
13 gargantuan job. But, you know, we are certainly going to do
14 what we can. I anticipate there will be a strategic
15 approach to that as far as looking at the more important
16 pieces of information, and maybe trusting in the less
17 important pieces of information, but it really depends on
18 the timing of everything, what numbers you reach, when you
19 reach those numbers, and what is manageable, and we will do
20 what we can, but I think just to - so you walk away with
21 some certainty here, what we really are focusing on is that
22 120 because that 120 is a number that is something we can
23 certainly work with and that we anticipate that is a point
24 in the process where, while you are doing your interviews,
25 and you will be doing that over a period of about a month,

1 that will give us a period of about a month to be looking
2 into those kinds of questions regarding those Applicants.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, Steven. Any more
4 questions?

5 MR. RUSSO: Thank you.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, Steven, again. We
7 appreciate the information.

8 **ITEM 4. Panel Counsel's Report**

9 CHAIR AHMADI: I think it is time for us to move on
10 to the next agenda item, which is, as I mentioned in my
11 announcements, sharing or disseminating some reports by our
12 Counsel. So, Counsel, please begin.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you. As you know, but
14 the public may not be clear on, we used an electronic
15 system, this has been a virtually paperless process, we used
16 an electronic database to store all Applicant materials,
17 including public comments and letters of recommendation.
18 Each panelist had an opportunity to use that system to
19 review applications and, as you went through your
20 independent assessments, you and your staff, made
21 independent assessments to recommend whether an Applicant be
22 retained in the pool for further consideration, or be
23 eliminated from the pool. I asked you to finish preparing
24 your assessments on Tuesday evening of this week. On
25 Wednesday morning, I asked staff to use data from the

1 electronic database to generate the reports that Diane is
2 now disseminating to you. Also, we are going to upload the
3 reports onto the website, it may take a few minutes, but IT
4 staff can do that now, and in a few moments, hopefully those
5 folks who are following via Livestream will be able to see
6 the same data that you are now seeing. Diane is also making
7 a few copies of the reports available to the back of the
8 room. Bear in mind that some of the reports are quite
9 lengthy, we made photocopies based on our historical
10 attendance and, if we run out of photocopies, certainly they
11 are public records and you may make a request for
12 information through the Public Records Act to obtain
13 photocopies at a later point in time. I also want to say
14 that you have not seen these reports until just now, so I
15 hope I can keep your attention for just a little bit.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: I am so excited about - sorry.

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: That is okay. The only staff
18 who have seen these reports are those folks who had a need
19 to know in order to assist you to make photocopies, there
20 are strict statutory confidentiality requirements that are
21 placed on all Bureau work, and all of our staff is required
22 to comply with those, so I have no doubt that they have
23 maintained confidentiality until right now.

24 The first report that you will see is a list of 622
25 Applicants who received one or more favorable recommendation

1 from any panelist. And as a companion to that report, we
2 have also provided some demographic information so that you
3 have got one report that tells you, of all 622 of those
4 individuals, what is their party affiliation, where do they
5 live, what is their economic status, etc. We have further
6 broken that down so that you will see - there are 147
7 Applicants who received two or more favorable
8 recommendations, and we have broken down the demographic
9 data for those individuals. We have also broken down the
10 data for the 31 folks who have received three favorable
11 recommendations, and then we have done the same thing for
12 the 444 Applicants who received a favorable recommendation
13 by just one panel member.

14 In addition, we have our mega report, which is a
15 huge document.

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Excuse me, you also provided us
17 the 422 that -

18 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You should have that, as
19 well. Diane? Okay, we will get that to you. Diane will
20 check on the status of that. In addition, we have this huge
21 phonebook of a report that is 3,924 individuals who did not
22 receive a favorable recommendation from any Panelist, and
23 that report reflects the Applicant's name, as well as the
24 reason why each panelist individually decided that the
25 Applicant should not be retained in the pool. I will note

1 that some names are all caps, some names are all lower case,
2 some names are as you would typically write a name,
3 capitalized on the first letter, that is because we pulled
4 this data directly from the database, and so if you entered
5 your name as an Applicant in all lowercase, that is how it
6 should be reflected on this report. The same is true for
7 your notes. Some of you, especially Nasir, would indicate
8 through the last three digits of a regulation that you
9 thought was at issue, we did not change that, and we did
10 that to protect the integrity of the process. We did not
11 want to change the answers and make mistakes, so we have
12 pulled the information, including the demographic
13 information and the percentages and counts directly from the
14 database, you do not have to worry about relying on my math,
15 which is something you have all learned is very dangerous.
16 So with that said, IT staff can go ahead and upload that
17 information.

18 The last thing that I want to point out to you is a
19 separate agenda item that relates to agenda item 7, but as
20 you know, yesterday or the day before, I gave you a list of
21 seven Applicants that I wanted you to be prepared to discuss
22 today to help facilitate your -

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Stephanie, was that six
24 Applicants? Or was it seven?

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I am sorry, did I say seven?

1 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes.

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Agenda Item 7, six
3 Applicants. Thank you.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Obviously, I did not tell you
6 how you voted on those Applicants, you will be able to see
7 that information now. The Applicants, I just picked them
8 randomly, Tangerine Brigham, David Deaver, Octavio Gonzales,
9 Gracie Madrid, Charles Starr, and Phoenix Von Hendy, I
10 pulled those names for you so that you could discuss them at
11 a later point in time, but did not indicate how you had
12 voted on those Applicants. And with that said, that
13 concludes my report.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you so much, Stephanie. And I
15 think, you know, having the reports is really helpful for us
16 now to see where each member of the Panel stands because it
17 is the very first time that we are looking at each other's
18 assessments. And also, looking at the time, it is 10:41
19 right now, I think it is a good time for us to break for
20 about 20 minutes so that we can go back to our desks and
21 look at the reports in private, in our offices. So if we
22 can come back at 11:00, we will continue with our meeting.
23 Thanks.

24 (Off the record at 10:43 a.m.)

25 (Back on the record at 11:03 a.m.)

1 CHAIR AHMADI: It is 11:00 and I was just informed
2 that we had some technical difficulties when you were
3 printing these reports, so as you probably noticed, the list
4 of them knows, the individuals received three unfavorable
5 votes from any of the Panel members, it stops at the letter
6 "W" and that indicates to me that the list may not be
7 complete, so in fairness and just to make sure that we have
8 a complete list, I think we should extend our break and make
9 it kind of like a lunch break, maybe, and reconvene at
10 12:00. That will give us enough time to make sure that the
11 list is complete and, also, we will take advantage of that
12 time to also upload it onto the Internet for Internet
13 viewers. So we will reconvene at 12:00 sharp. Yes?

14 MR. LEVIN: Would you take a question from the
15 public not related to the list, but related to an earlier
16 topic in today's meeting?

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Uh -

18 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I think we should actually
19 wait so we can get the technical issue resolved, but there
20 will be an opportunity for public comment generally, and
21 also about Applicants, when we come back in.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, so we will reconvene at 12:00.
23 Thank you.

24 (Off the record at 11:05 a.m.)

25 (Back on the record at 12:02 p.m.)

1 CHAIR AHMADI: The hour being 12:00, we are going to
2 reconvene and continue with our meeting. Before we continue
3 on the next agenda item, or continue with the discussion
4 about the next agenda item, the reason why we were missing
5 seven pages from this initial print-out of the Applicants
6 who did not receive favorable recommendation from the Panel
7 was a PDF limitation; apparently, our office never printed
8 more than 300 pages in one file, so when it had the 302nd
9 page in that file, it just stopped downloading the data, so
10 we have fixed that problem and we have the seven pages that
11 we are missing printed out, and they are available in the
12 back of the room, and I am sure that the file that we will
13 upload onto the website will be complete.

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: And the IT staff should do
15 that now.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, thank you.

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Nasir, before we continue on,
18 there was a call in about an individual that I knew, he
19 called in and it was Tom Dithridge, and how we know each
20 other is that he was the - I did not work directly with him,
21 we worked together at Department of Finance, and was a
22 higher Management person than I was, and I was in a unit
23 that he oversaw. So I just wanted to let everyone know that
24 he called in and wanted to remind me, because I totally
25 forgot about this relationship, and I wanted to let everyone

1 know.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, Mary. Thank you very
3 much.

4 **ITEM 5. Public Comment on Applicants**

5 CHAIR AHMADI: So at this point, I think we would
6 like to hear from the public, if they have any comments,
7 questions, to share with us in regard to these reports or
8 this Agenda item. Seeing that there is no public comment, I
9 think we can move on - I am sorry, Sam wants to share
10 something.

11 MR. WALTON: Sam Walton, and I am with the National
12 Association for the Advancement of Colored People. And I am
13 not sure if you have already - if you will answer this as
14 you go, but the one thing, as I was looking at the list of
15 the people who got not one check, will those be just kind of
16 placed in a wading pool until you finish your work? Or are
17 you planning to -

18 CHAIR AHMADI: We will talk about that.

19 MR. WALTON: Okay, I am sorry.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: That - you are right on it, yeah, we
21 will talk about that.

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Did you want to pick up on -
23 there was a comment from a gentleman in the blue shirt.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, please.

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Did you -

1 MR. LEVIN: It is not with respect to this agenda
2 item, which is why I did not rise.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: That is okay.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Otherwise we could forget.

5 MR. LEVIN: I appreciate it very much.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: No problem.

7 MR. LEVIN: My name is Dan Levin, I am an Applicant
8 from Portola Valley, California, and I would like to note
9 before I say this that I received three positive - I was
10 honored to receive three positive votes from the Panel
11 members -

12 CHAIR AHMADI: I am glad.

13 MR. LEVIN: -- so I share that to make it clear that
14 what I am about to say is not because I am trying to act in
15 my own behalf, but rather in the furtherance of ensuring
16 that the process is as fair and open as it can be. I noted
17 earlier that there was a discussion about the possibility of
18 the panel asking the Bureau to do research on Applicants. I
19 think Ms. Spano mentioned the concept of a book being
20 mentioned, or a link being mentioned in an application. And
21 I wanted to just briefly share a concern about that. I am
22 sure that other Applicants will agree with me when I say
23 that the single most difficult aspect of completing the
24 Supplemental Application process was dealing with the
25 requirement to be brief. The 500-word limit created a very

1 difficult set of trade-offs where Applicants had to judge
2 whether to share additional facts, to share the
3 ramifications and implications of those facts, or to share
4 opinion, and how to invest those 500 words across those
5 three categories. And I know, for example, that I spent
6 literally hours counting, you know, in words, looking at
7 that word counter, trading off "is it more important for me
8 to say this, or explain this, or voice this opinion, in each
9 one of these five essays?" And I am concerned that, to the
10 degree that you do follow-on research into the information
11 presented in the applications of only some Applicants and
12 not others, you are undermining that decision-making process
13 to some degree, you are undermining that limitation that was
14 imposed on all of us to use our judgment about how to invest
15 those 500 words most effectively. So I would encourage you
16 to be thoughtful about that as contemplate the idea of
17 asking for additional research information about any of
18 these Applicants because I do think it is critical that the
19 process be as fair to everyone as is humanly possible. And
20 I appreciate your time very much.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Appreciate that. Any
22 other comments from the public? Okay.

23 **ITEM 6. Applicant selection and reduction of Applicant pool**
24 **(see Attachment 1 for list of Applicants being considered).**
25 **The panel will identify the most qualified Applicants,**

1 examine the demographics of the pool of most qualified
2 Applicants for purposes of assessing its political, racial,
3 ethnic, gender, economic, and geographic diversity, and vote
4 to retain the most qualified Applicants in the Applicant
5 pool and eliminate all other Applicants from further
6 consideration

7 CHAIR AHMADI: It is time to move on to our
8 discussion about what we see for the first time, which is
9 the result of our assessments in one single document. The
10 outcome of this discussion should be an action item to
11 decide on whom to move forward as Applicants who will be
12 eligible for further review and decision-making process. So
13 I would like to open the discussion for Panel members and,
14 at the end of this discussion we will hear from the public
15 again in terms of any issues that we talked about or any
16 topics that we discuss here related to the decision-making
17 process for these remaining Applicants or to be remaining
18 Applicants.

19 I can see from the reports that the Counsel has
20 given us that we have as - let me just backtrack a little
21 bit - one of the issues that we will be looking at from now
22 on will be the issue of diversity because the Voters First
23 Act requires us to make sure that the Commission that is
24 formed is reasonably diverse. So, so far, as you probably
25 remember from our meetings in the past public meetings, the

1 focus was on minimum qualifications as stated in the
2 Regulations, and from this point forward we have to take
3 into consideration the issue of diversity because the end
4 result of our decisions will be a pool of Applicants that is
5 made up of 60 of the most qualified Applicants who are not
6 only politically diverse, but also based on those diversity
7 criteria that we have in the Regulations. So, looking at
8 these reports as it stands at this point in time, if we look
9 at the Applicants who received three favorable
10 recommendations, obviously we do not have enough to make up
11 60 of the most qualified Applicants. So, if we look at the
12 next list, which is the 147 Applicants who received at least
13 two favorable recommendations, and we add that to the 31 who
14 received three, it looks like we will have diversity, for
15 sure, in terms of demographic data, for party affiliation,
16 race/ethnicity, gender, geographic, and locations or regions
17 in California, and economic status. And then, if we look at
18 the 444 who received one favorable recommendation from any
19 of the Panel members, again, I can see that we have good
20 diversity in that group, as well. So it sounds to me that,
21 in all fairness to everybody who received at least a single
22 favorable recommendation from any of the Panel members, that
23 there is some merit in looking back into all of the
24 applications in the entire pool of Applicants who received
25 at least one recommendation, to make sure that we did not

1 overlook something, or the person who did say no, double-
2 check to make sure that it is really a no because I think
3 that would be the most favorable approach, at least in my
4 judgment, and also in all fairness to everybody who got at
5 least one yes, or one favorable recommendation. So what do
6 you think?

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Nasir, I also agree, if you
8 add the three favorable votes to the two favorable votes,
9 the party affiliation with "Other" still does not come up to
10 even 40, so I agree with you in the sense that we should
11 take another look at just the 622 Applicants that have
12 received at least one favorable vote.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: I totally agree, that is a very
14 good point.

15 MS. SPANO: I agree. There could be some value in
16 looking further into these applications with one favorable
17 vote because each of us may have seen a quality maybe the
18 other one may have missed or thought was more important, and
19 I would like to know, in further review, all of the
20 information.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so it sounds like we are in
22 consensus in terms of moving forward with everybody who
23 received at least a single favorable recommendation. And do
24 we have any comments from the public that we want to hear
25 now? Yes, sir. Please come to the podium and state your

1 name for the record, sir.

2 MR. KRUSE: Thank you. My name is Bob Kruse, I am
3 from Marysville and just some clarification. Your task
4 today, by the end of the day today, are you looking to come
5 up with - you mentioned 300 to 400 names at the last
6 meeting, is that what you are looking to do today? Or has
7 that been changed or -

8 CHAIR AHMADI: The numbers that we have used so
9 far in our public meetings were just estimates, those were
10 not pre-determined numbers, and we are just hoping to have a
11 smaller pool of eligible Applicants that is more manageable
12 and, as Steven mentioned this morning, the smaller the pool
13 we have, the more we can do in terms of our research and our
14 microscopic review of the information.

15 MR. KRUSE: Okay, so today will not be the 120
16 finalists?

17 CHAIR AHMADI: No.

18 MR. KRUSE: Okay, that was what I needed to know.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, good question. Any
20 other questions or comments from the public? Yes, sir.

21 MR. VAN METER: Peter Van Meter, an Applicant from
22 Sausalito. In one of your earlier meetings, you mentioned
23 that, in your preliminary review of the Supplemental
24 Applications, you may not actually have the time to read
25 through the entire application, but some of you may be

1 focusing in slightly different areas you are particularly
2 interested in. Is there an intent now with the 622 list
3 evidently you are going to bring forward, to now go back as
4 you do your second review, to actually go through the entire
5 application? Will you have time to do that?

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Again, that is a very good question
7 and I am glad that you asked that because I forgot to
8 mention, just reiterate on what we have done so far. In a
9 few minutes, we have another agenda item which is examples
10 of applications that the Panel members reviewed, and we will
11 discuss in detail for each one of those applications as to
12 what was the basis for our decisions, what type of
13 information did we use to make those decisions. In general,
14 in the previous meetings when we mentioned about our
15 approaches, again, this whole process is new for all of us.
16 Our approach has been two-fold all alone, one is to be in
17 compliance with the law, and the other one is to be as
18 efficient as possible. In favor of efficiency, I think the
19 decision that we have discussed, and if you recall from our
20 meetings in the previous sessions, our focus in this initial
21 review has been qualifications; in other words, we looked at
22 all essay questions and any information that is related to
23 the minimum qualifications of the Applicants, and we made
24 the decision based on that information. So hopefully that
25 will answer your question and concern.

1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Did you only look at essay
2 responses? Or did you look at other -

3 CHAIR AHMADI: No, we looked at all Applicant
4 material, thank you, Stephanie. For example, not everybody
5 had public comments, but some Applicants did have public
6 comments and we looked at all of that, and we looked at the
7 letters of recommendation for all those Applicants that we
8 reviewed. Does that answer your question, Stephanie?

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: My review, I will kind of go
12 over it when we start discussing the people and how I looked
13 at the individuals, and what information that I did look at
14 because there are some circumstances that I did not look at
15 all the letters of recommendation, and I will kind of go
16 over that with you when we discuss those six individuals.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: We will go into the details of
18 those examples and hopefully that will help all of us to get
19 into each other's minds and heads.

20 MS. SPANO: I did want to add something. If
21 anybody has any concern about the extent of the review that
22 was done of the applications, there were 4,500 or so
23 applications to go through, we had to physically look at
24 every single one of them, and some applications were very
25 dense, they were very complete, had well thought out answers

1 and responses; others were, frankly, a little incomplete, so
2 there was not a lot to evaluate. So it varied. And to the
3 extent possible, we had several staff, Bureau staff,
4 assisting us in trying to help us make these
5 recommendations, and I think some of us have even looked at
6 some of these applications two, three, four, five times
7 before we made a decision. And so I think we did - at
8 least, I feel like I did a pretty good, thorough, initial
9 review of these applications. I may have not read every
10 single letter of recommendation, or every public comment,
11 but I thought I did a pretty good job at getting an idea of
12 the character of the Applicant, and what they had to offer
13 based on their application. And I felt pretty good about my
14 decisions and about everything that is reported here, I am
15 pretty confident that I did the best review that I could at
16 the time with the timeframe and resources that we had. So I
17 do not want somebody to think that they got short-changed in
18 any way because we really did do our due diligence and our
19 strongest effort in trying to manage and review every single
20 one.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, Kerri. So any other
22 comments, questions, before we move forward? Seeing none, I
23 think it is time for me to move that we eliminate all those
24 Applicants who did not receive any single favorable vote
25 from the pool of Applicants, as stated in the Counsel's

1 Report, entitled 3,924 Applicants who did not Receive a
2 Favorable Recommendation from any Panelist. May I have a
3 second?

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I second that.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Do we have any public
6 comments, questions? Seeing none, all in favor, please say
7 "aye."

8 (Ayes.) All opposed? Seeing no opposition, the
9 mission is carried - the motion is carried, sorry. Thank
10 you. I am excited. So with that, let me just add a few
11 comments here, that the Applicants who were just eliminated
12 from the process will be taken off of the website. From
13 this point on, the Bureau staff will focus on changing the
14 system to leave only those Applicants who received at least
15 a single favorable vote, and all the other information,
16 application material, will be taken off of the website and
17 it is no longer public record. Yes, do you have a question?

18 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Let me clarify, it is
19 public record, and it is not on the website.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Correct, thank you, Counsel.

21 MR. WRIGHT: And the data is being archived,
22 correct?

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It has to be for 12 years,
24 correct.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, thank you. Thanks for that

1 question, sorry. So as the Counsel mentioned this morning,
2 a few days ago, a couple of days ago, the Counsel asked us
3 to give us a list of six Applicants, or six applications for
4 all the Panel members to use as examples, to share with the
5 public and to share amongst the Panel members the details of
6 how we made those decisions, so have the list of those six
7 Applicants here and, again, the names are Tangerine Brigham,
8 David Deaver, Octavio Gonzales, Garcie [sic] Madrid -

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Gracie - Gracie Madrid.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Gracie, I am sorry, Gracie Madrid,
11 Charles Starr, Phoenix Von Hendy. So we will go through
12 each one of these applications and the Panel members will
13 discuss the details of the information in each of these, and
14 hopefully the discussion will also help the Panel members to
15 better understand their own evaluation process and
16 individualized judgments that they have to make, making the
17 decisions on the remaining of the pool.

18 So the first application that we have, Tangerine
19 Brigham. I voted for this individual as a favorable
20 Applicant to remain in the pool. What did you guys think?

21 MS. SPANO: I did, as well.

22 CHAIR CAMACHO: So did I.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so this is one of those 31
24 Applicants who received a favorable vote from all the Panel
25 members. So obviously this reconciles with my judgment when

1 I saw the information on this application, and I was very
2 impressed with the amount of information that is relevant to
3 the work of the Commission, and the way the statements were
4 made were very thoughtful and very complete, and to the
5 point, and the effective communication skills were there, as
6 well. Going to the details, do you guys want to talk first?
7 Or do you want me to continue to discuss this one, or share
8 with you my thought on this one?

9 MS. SPANO: Do you want to go to how we would
10 assess the application, like in order?

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I agree with you, Kerri, in
12 the sense of going through how we assess this.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so do you want to start,
14 Mary?

15 MS. SPANO: I mean, when I look at an application,
16 we agreed that we would look at all essay questions, and
17 when we got these sample applications to discuss here today,
18 I mean, I look at certain things like if there are any odd
19 things that would stand out to me, if they answered yes to
20 any of the items in conflict of interest, and things like
21 that, I just scan that. Then I go to the essay questions
22 and I start with one, and then I proceed to two, three, and
23 four. And I always try to keep in mind that, you know, part
24 of the responses to one question could occur in another area
25 also, so I always try to keep that in mind as I am going

1 through the application because, if it is not strong, and I
2 feel like the response really did not quite make it, it
3 could have very well been placed in another area such as
4 Item 5 or 6 in the Activities, or Other Information. So I
5 just wanted to say that as we go on.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure, thank you.

7 CHAIR CAMACHO: With my assessment, I had nine
8 silo staff - I call them "silo" because they were just my
9 staff that would help me with my assessment. So they would
10 give me comments on these individuals, all 4,546 of these
11 individuals. They worked so hard, so they would go through
12 and look at all six of those essay questions, they would
13 provide comments within - since this was performed
14 electronically, they would provide comments within the three
15 key qualification, because that is what I was having them
16 take a look at. So if they saw something that clearly
17 demonstrated the Applicant's impartiality, they would state
18 that and help me identify that. They would go to diversity,
19 they would see, okay, where is this Applicant demonstrating
20 that they understand the geographic and demographic
21 diversity of California? They put that in the comment. And
22 then, with the related analytical skills, they would take a
23 look at those and they would provide me comments. And at
24 the very bottom of the application, the electronic form had
25 an item where it would give their overall comment, and they

1 would provide their comment there. They would also take a
2 quick look at family members to see if there was maybe any
3 conflict of interest that was not identified. They would
4 send me an e-mail, I would send that question up to
5 Stephanie, and Stephanie would send it over to Steven
6 Russo's team to investigate. They would also take a quick
7 look at their educational background and their employment
8 history because there are some instances individuals would
9 put in their employment history, a little bit more
10 information that could help with the analytical skills, and
11 California diversity, or the impartiality. So they would
12 take a quick look at those. When those were completed, I
13 could see them on my screen, I could review those, and I
14 could make a decision.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: So did you - Mary, sorry for
16 interrupting -

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No, go ahead.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: So getting back to our examples
19 here, and I want to make sure that we do it in detail in our
20 decision-making process when we make those judgment, I just
21 want to make sure it is clear for me, as well. When you
22 received those comment, you mentioned that you made a
23 decision based on those comments? Or did you review the
24 information in the application?

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I would - since I did not

1 have time to personally read every single essay question, I
2 relied on my staff's comments. If I was unclear on their
3 comment, then that is when I would look at the information
4 within the application, to get a better understanding.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: So going back to our example, when
6 I looked at this individual here, I reviewed every single
7 essay question, and then when I looked at the application
8 requirements based on the Regulations, I mainly focused on
9 60800, which is the impartiality statement, and I focused on
10 805, that is 60805, which is the appreciation for diversity
11 in terms of demographics and geography in the state, and I
12 also looked at the analytical skills, which is 60827, and I
13 looked at the complete package in terms of, you know, the
14 letters of recommendation, the response to the essay
15 questions and, as Mary suggested and Kerri suggested, I also
16 glanced through the remaining of the remaining parts of the
17 application to make sure that I am not overlooking
18 something, especially in the area of conflict of interest,
19 or any contributions that they made to any political
20 parties, for example, that will automatically make the
21 Applicant ineligible to move forward. So for the
22 impartiality, this individual provided a very complete and
23 thorough response. Basically, looking at the interest
24 statement, for example, on this application, the individual
25 covered all bases of the minimum qualifications. She talked

1 about how she can be impartial, she talked about what is her
2 understanding of what California is about in terms of the
3 different groups of people living in the different
4 localities, and how they relate to each other, and how each
5 group relates to, or how that diversity impacts political
6 preferences in terms of their representation. It was
7 clearly very demonstrative of, a very clear statement to
8 help me, and the decision-making on this one was very easy
9 because, as I was going through the essay questions, I was
10 like, yes, yes, yes, that is what I want to see, and it
11 helped me without hesitation to say "this is one of my most
12 qualified, or potentially most qualified," because I had not
13 reviewed everybody at that point in time, but I was
14 reviewing this one.

15 MS. SPANO: So you are talking about - I am sorry,
16 Nasir, just to clarify, you are talking about your comments
17 related to your review of number one? Question one?

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes. Tangerine - I am sorry -

19 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Brigham.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Ms. Brigham, yes.

21 MS. SPANO: Okay.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: So I looked at the essay questions,
23 number one was clearly comprehensive and complete in terms
24 of all those minimum qualifications, and I looked at number
25 two, and I broke down the requirements in the law, which is

1 in 60805, which is Appreciation for California's Diversity
2 and Demographics, in terms of demographics and geography.
3 To be honest with you, from my assessment of all the
4 applications that I reviewed, this was perhaps one of the
5 most difficult questions for the Applicants to respond to.
6 Most applications that I saw would talk something about how
7 great the travels that they have had have been, experiences
8 that they had traveling, both personal and work-related
9 travel that they had to different parts of the regions of
10 California and, again, indicating how different segments of
11 population are distributed throughout the state in different
12 areas. The difficulty in most of those responses, for me,
13 was to try to understand, did they understand, or does the
14 response suggest that the Applicant understands the
15 relationship between those two; in other words, how the
16 differences formed political preferences. So, going back to
17 my example here, I could clearly see that this individual
18 had no problem explaining that in a clear manner that
19 convinced me that, yes, they understand who is living where,
20 and what some of the common issues or preferences that
21 different groups of people have throughout the state.

22 MS. SPANO: Nasir, can I just maybe toss this out
23 to the Panel members?

24 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure.

25 MS. SPANO: Just to get a better idea of how each

1 of you reviewed and evaluated your application, would it be
2 possible to maybe stimulate discussion on one question at a
3 time, like you commented on how you assess one? Is that
4 okay?

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes.

6 MS. SPANO: I do not know how Mary feels -

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: That is good.

8 MS. SPANO: Just to give an idea, so if I
9 evaluated something a little differently, or if I considered
10 something else, and you know, while you are looking at your
11 response, instead of going back, I think it would be right
12 to do it -

13 CHAIR AHMADI: No, I agree. So do you want to go
14 back to number one?

15 MS. SPANO: I did, and I know that it is not
16 required by the law to write your - to describe why you are
17 interested, however, when I do look at this, I do consider
18 whether it adds value to the rest of the essay in terms of,
19 does it support the diversity requirement, the analytical
20 skills, and the impartiality. And what was critical, I know
21 we discussed this at our last meeting, was, does the
22 Applicant embrace the VRA? Does it understand Prop. 11 and
23 the significance and the impact of the work? And if they
24 can provide us, at least me, with a decent response
25 explaining that and what it means to them, they have got my

1 attention and I am going to pay - and a lot of times, these
2 Applicants, the strong ones, will list out what they are
3 going to say and how they are going to respond, and how they
4 are going to qualify in the rest of the essay. And it kind
5 of gives you a little map of how they do that, and that is
6 what I consider a very good response. Now, this candidate,
7 Ms. Brigham, she actually made a point to really describe
8 well how she understands the VRA, and how it applies to
9 Commission work. And she made that connection clear. And,
10 to me, that was really important and I thought, you know,
11 this woman may have valuable experience to provide to us,
12 and so it came through in her initial response for me
13 compared to other responses that I saw, that maybe thought
14 this was just a community service gig that they wanted to
15 do. This woman understands the significant effort and work
16 and time involved in doing this, and so that is my
17 distinction in characteristics.

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: While looking at number one,
19 what I noted in this particular Applicant's response was it
20 was nice information to get kind of a background of this
21 individual, but I did not feel that it provided any
22 substance for the impartiality, for the California
23 diversity, and the analytical skills. It kind of provided a
24 lot of information that was pulled off or obtained from
25 maybe websites, it gave a good information of what she can

1 do, but it did not really demonstrate to me that she was
2 impartial, so I agree in sense of Kerri's comment, it kind
3 of gave a good background of the person and why they wanted
4 to be a Commission member.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. I agree. Perhaps you were
6 looking for more detailed, direct statements in regard to
7 those minimum qualifications, but again, looking at, you
8 know, the location of this response, as Kerri suggested,
9 this is not in response to one of those specific questions,
10 this is a general comment about why they are interested, and
11 my perception of those statements were that the statements
12 made were in line with the requirements. So it was a good
13 response, to me. Do you want to move forward with the
14 second one, Kerri?

15 MS. SPANO: Yes. I know I interrupted you when
16 you were in the middle of talking about what was important
17 to you about the response to impartiality, so feel free to
18 continue with -

19 CHAIR AHMADI: No, that is okay, sure. As I
20 mentioned, you know, the benefit of going to this level of
21 detail is two-fold, one, for the Panel members to understand
22 each other's - because this is the first time that we are
23 ultimately sharing our thoughts on our judgments, basically,
24 on applications, and for the public to see how we did it
25 because I know the volume is vast and we mentioned several

1 times that we want to be as efficient as possible, so this
2 will also help us in our efficiency down the road as we
3 continue with the process.

4 So for the second one, which is a response to the
5 requirement related to the 60800, which is Impartiality,
6 again, as I mentioned in my previous statements, I was
7 looking for statements that clearly demonstrates not only
8 understanding what impartiality is about, but also
9 demonstration of instances of life experiences, or work-
10 related experiences, that the individual has been imposed to
11 their situations where they have some political or social or
12 any personal opinions about things, but they were able to
13 set it aside, and they were able to set it aside for the
14 good of the majority of - or to achieve the objective of
15 whatever that discussion might have been, would be for them.
16 So in response to this question, this individual clearly
17 mentioned several examples to share that kind of ability
18 that she has opinions about things, and she has been in
19 situations where she had to set them aside to make the
20 decision that is fair and based on the facts, not based on
21 opinions. So -

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I agree with you, Nasir, in
23 the sense that she provided an example while she - I think
24 it is a current employer with the San Francisco Department
25 of Public Health, I thought that was a very good example,

1 and also in her volunteer work and on B, I think, as a
2 Director on a Nonprofit Board, so I thought those were two
3 very good examples.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: I agree.

5 MS. SPANO: I agree. I think she clearly
6 demonstrated well and she has 20 years in the Department
7 where she demonstrated impartiality, and where these
8 responses really make it or break it for me is if they can
9 actually explain how they demonstrated impartiality, and not
10 just say that "I'm impartial because it is part of the
11 requirement in my job to do so." I thought that was a
12 pretty lousy response, it did not show me that they were
13 capable of being impartial. I thought this woman had
14 thoughtful constructed responses and specific to her
15 volunteer work, to her board work, commission work that
16 could probably connect to Commission work and make that
17 leap. I thought they would add value in Commission work in
18 her years of service doing this.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: I - and maybe if I could just
20 intervene in the interest of time and being efficient,
21 clearly, this is the one that we all agreed on, that this is
22 a ideal response, or ideal application in terms of the
23 responses to those questions, so maybe if we can just save
24 time and go through this one a little high level. I am not
25 suggesting that we should ignore any detail, but to the

1 extent that we can, I think it benefits us to focus more on
2 the ones that we had differences in opinion, to see what
3 caused that difference, basically, would be very helpful to
4 me, as well, as we continue with this process. So with
5 that, I think if we look at - do you have anything else to
6 add on number two, Mary?

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Not - the only other thing is
8 I noted that she also provided some information on
9 diversity, it was kind of just a comment, but it also kind
10 of brought you to the next question.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Right. So the next question was,
12 or the next essay response, was about the requirements about
13 the analytical skills, relevant analytical skills. Again,
14 the response from this individual was ideal both in terms of
15 her understanding of what that requirement is about, her
16 understanding of what the Commission is tasked with in terms
17 of the challenges that they have in place, in her
18 demonstration of examples, two examples of situations where
19 this individual has been imposed in those kinds of
20 situations where she had to make decisions fast, and
21 accurate, and based on facts. And she has the capacity to
22 do that. In the response to this question, she uses some
23 good examples about her responsibility being a member of
24 boards or committees and making those decisions in a fast-
25 paced environment. So, to me, that was ideal.

1 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: With this Applicant's
2 response regarding California diversity and dealing with
3 demographics and geographics, I felt her geographics
4 response was a little weak, however, she did provide a
5 geographic response. And she did provide some demographic
6 responses.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. That is good to know, and
8 going back to that point, I think when I looked at essay
9 number one, there were some indications about the different
10 demographics there, as well, so that is how I tied those
11 together and just connected the two essays together, for
12 that purpose.

13 MS. SPANO: I think what was important to me was
14 also her connection to the political process, the electoral
15 process.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. As part of the analytical
17 skills?

18 MS. SPANO: Yes, well, in diversity because a lot
19 of people cite that they have been here and there and all
20 over the state, they know people of different ethnicities,
21 but this person actually made an attempt to actually explain
22 why it is important and why it is in the electoral process.
23 I mean, she has an understanding of the importance of that
24 under represented population. And so that was an important
25 characteristic she described.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: And then please jump in and share
2 ideas as we go through this.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And she also did provide,
4 like Kerri was saying, she did have some comments within her
5 diversity or California Diversity response that went to
6 analytical works, she also had some information within
7 Question 5 that related to her diversity question, so I
8 noted that, too.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: I came across several applications
10 where the Applicants' response to one essay question not
11 only covers that question, but also relates to the other
12 requirements, and I did not stop myself from relating the
13 different sections of the application to different
14 requirements, depending on, you know, what I was looking
15 for. For example, when it comes to the issue of
16 impartiality, I did not only limit my review to the essay
17 question, but I also looked at the financial contributions
18 to see what organizations this individual is more interested
19 with. And also, I looked at the family members, for
20 example, whether or not there is any family member with whom
21 the Applicant may have a bona fide relationship, who may be
22 in a position that make them automatically ineligible to
23 participate. So the entire application has to be looked at
24 before you make your final decision on each one of these
25 minimal qualifications. The other part of the application

1 that I can use on this one is letters of recommendation, for
2 example, and clearly, the letters of recommendation for this
3 individual further substantiated the fact that this
4 individual has been in key responsibilities, had key
5 responsibilities in different types of employment that she
6 had in the past few years, and the examples used by those
7 who recommended this individual was also related to the
8 minimum qualifications that I was looking for, so it was
9 good to see that and it made my decision easier.

10 MS. SPANO: I like this candidate because, in
11 addition to her qualifications that she described in her
12 essay, her letters of recommendation actually enhanced her
13 qualifications, they added and strengthened who she was and
14 what she said, and they even provided more detail for me to
15 understand what she wrote and put in context some of the
16 community projects that she was on, because there is not a
17 lot of room to write everything that you have been involved
18 in, and you have these sources that are able to actually
19 describe because they have actually worked with them in a
20 volunteer project, at work, or whatever, and so you get a
21 better sense of their involvement in the community service
22 project, or whatever program, whether it shows consensus, or
23 whatever, in analytical, or diversity, it just propels them
24 to me at another level, whereas letters of recommendation
25 that just speak to their characteristic as "they're my

1 friend," "they're my neighbor," and they mow their lawn, "I
2 like them because they do that," does not help me understand
3 how they could add value as a Commissioner and do the work,
4 so I did agree with you, Nasir.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What I did like about this
7 individual's letters of recommendation was one was from a
8 current - from her current employer, or employment, but it
9 was from a subordinate, and they kind of, like Kerri was
10 saying, provided detailed information on that, so it kind of
11 gave a little bit more to the application. And another one
12 of her letters of recommendation came from a prior job and a
13 prior co-worker, so that kind of gave you another aspect,
14 and they provided some more detail. And then the final one
15 came from her current employer and it was a colleague, and
16 then her supervisor, so it kind of gave you another aspect.
17 Another thing I liked about this was I was able to relate
18 these individuals to the person. There were some
19 circumstances I could not figure out how the person related
20 to the Applicant, were they a colleague? Where they a
21 supervisor? Were they a subordinate? Did that person work
22 with them in a non-profit? So they gave kind of general
23 information, so I found that kind of hard to really gain any
24 information from those letters of recommendation.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you.

1 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: One thing I wanted to say is,
2 even though this individual did receive three favorable
3 recommendations, we are going to take a look at all these
4 individuals again, so this does not mean by the next meeting
5 that this person may go on, because we are going to be
6 looking at other information, just like what Steven Russo
7 said. We are going to also compare them to the other
8 Applicants because they have to be just as competitive to
9 the other Applicants. I am not sure what political
10 affiliation she is in, if she is in a Democrat, we have --
11 it looks like in the pool we have 300 people who we are
12 going to have to eventually get that down to 60, 40 - yeah
13 40, then 20. So that - who knows, when we look at them as a
14 group, we might have to change those recommendations.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: That is a very good point, Mary,
16 and I had on my personal cheat sheet here a topic that I
17 wanted to talk about, which was related what Mary just said,
18 which is about these 622 individuals that are currently
19 retained based on the decision that we made today, will be
20 looked at again by each Panel member, and it is important
21 for us and for the public to notice that, just because an
22 Applicant received three favorable yes's in the initial
23 review does not mean that they are guaranteed to receive an
24 interview, or to be accepted in the 60 - in the final list.
25 What we will do from now on is to put on our microscopes and

1 look at the information one more time, as if we have never
2 seen that information before. We will focus back on the
3 minimum qualifications, other information in the
4 applications, as well as letters of recommendation and
5 public comments. And chances are that we may change our
6 initial decisions, either way. So it is important to know
7 that. And for that same reason, any individual who receives
8 one favorable vote does not mean that they have a lesser
9 chance because we will go back to those applications and
10 look at them again, and then make the decisions in a public
11 meeting later. So with that, are we ready to move on to the
12 next example?

13 MS. SPANO: Yes.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. So the next individual
15 that we have is David Deaver. I am just going in the order
16 that we have listed them in here.

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I appreciate that.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. So, for this
19 individual, I voted yes. What about you guys?

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I voted no.

21 MS. SPANO: He was removed from the pool, from me.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: You voted unfavorable?

23 MS. SPANO: Yeah, unfavorable.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: This is a good one to talk about
25 because I can learn from this. So let's talk about this

1 one. Let me share with you why I voted yes for this
2 individual.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: When you do that, could you
4 please go from question to question? That would help me out
5 and I should make notes on mine.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure, no problem. So before we get
7 into the details on this application, let me just share with
8 you my own kind of system or thought process when I review
9 these applications. There were a number of applications
10 that I came across that were easy to make a decision on
11 either way, and that was based on the facts that were in the
12 application, either the response was, for example, superb
13 and it made it easier for me to say, "Yes, this is my
14 favorite Applicant, and this is an ideal Commissioner, for
15 me," or the response was so weak and so short or
16 insufficient that it also made the decision very easy for me
17 to say, "Compared to the ones I have seen so far, this
18 doesn't stand, it doesn't look like this individual is going
19 to make it through the process." And therefore, again, in
20 the interest of efficiency, I tried not to spend too much
21 time on those applications who clearly did not meet the
22 minimum qualifications based on the collective information
23 that was in the package.

24 So, for this individual, this is none of those two
25 types. This was an individual who was in the middle ground,

1 and, again, the amount of time that it took for me to look
2 at this group of individuals who were not clear in terms of
3 either way, their being as superb kind of a response, in
4 terms of requirements and compliance with those
5 requirements, or lack thereof. For these individuals, I
6 tried to make my judgments based on the, again, collective
7 information that was in the application. I did look at the
8 letters of recommendation, the source of the letters of
9 recommendation, their past experiences, even their
10 employment and education and the type of situations that
11 they were exposed to, or the type of experiences that they
12 had, which related somehow to the type of work that the
13 Commission will have to do. For example, any exposure to
14 the public environment, any understanding of specific legal
15 requirements related to the Commission's work, any job-
16 related experience in terms of, you know, understanding what
17 the State needs in the proclamation in the State. So,
18 because it was difficult to make those kinds of decisions
19 towards unfavorable, I tried to keep some individuals in the
20 pool so that, later on, I could go back to them and double-
21 check and re-look at the information that is there. So,
22 clearly, the reason why you guys said no to this individual,
23 and I said yes, is one of us had a judgment that was
24 slightly different, and it is not about the application or
25 the requirements, it is about our own personal judgments

1 based on how we interpret the information that is in the
2 application. So I will double-check this one, of course,
3 but let me share with you why did I say yes to this
4 individual. For one, the response to impartiality was
5 neutral, it was not as strong -

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Was that "neutral?"

7 CHAIR AHMADI: It was neutral.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: And what I mean by that is it was
10 not clear enough for me to say it is a no or a yes, or
11 favorable or unfavorable, it was somewhere in the middle.
12 It was just middle ground. And when I looked at the
13 responses, I broke down -- my thought process was kind of
14 like looking at, 1) do they understand the requirement, and
15 2) which was the second half, did they demonstrate to me
16 that they can comply with that requirement? So for neither
17 of those criteria did this individual meet my high bar,
18 basically. But there was enough information to keep this
19 individual in the pool, so that I can come back to it and
20 revisit the information. I am trying to find my specific
21 details here. So this individual recognized the demographic
22 of the State - I am sorry, I am looking through the wrong
23 one. Okay, I found it, sorry. So this individual had used
24 specific examples to demonstrate that he made some
25 decisions, which required impartiality, however, the

1 examples were not bolstered, they were not detailed enough
2 to help me understand to what extent this individual had any
3 direct impact in that decision-making process. So it was
4 difficult to say yes or no to this one because, yes, they
5 were exposed to a situation where they had to leave their
6 personal opinions aside, but it did not tell me enough
7 whether or not they were the decision-makers in that
8 process. So maybe this was one of those that I was thinking
9 to go back and maybe, if they make it through the interview,
10 I would probably ask the individual for detail about how
11 they can meet this requirement. So on this one, 800, which
12 is impartiality, what was your take on that?

13 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Mine was the same. I did not
14 really see a clear demonstration that this individual showed
15 that they could be impartial, so that is one of them, the
16 reason why, you know, when we look at the other two
17 qualifications because it is not just one qualification that
18 will, in my respects, you know, if you are weak in one, if
19 you are stronger in other areas, to me, for my people, when
20 I looked at them I might have still given you a favorable
21 recommendation; however, if I saw not as strong in a couple
22 different qualifications, most likely I did not give you a
23 favorable recommendation, and this was one of the areas I
24 thought he was a little weak on.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: It was a difficult one.

1 MS. SPANO: I just want to backtrack a little bit.
2 I know Question 1 is not requiring of the law, but I read
3 it, and as I read it, it tells me does this Applicant have
4 the ability to communicate well, can he form complete
5 sentences, does he speak as if he is talking to his friend
6 in slang? You know, I mean it is things like those that
7 helps me understand who this person is, sets the tone for
8 the remaining part of the response. When he described his
9 desire to serve on the Redistricting Commission, and I have
10 seen stronger responses, and I did not think he stood out at
11 all, but that is not a requirement, I just keep it in the
12 back of my head. As I move to impartiality, I look at his
13 response -

14 CHAIR AHMADI: So before you move to the
15 impartiality, I am sorry for interrupting you, looking at
16 that interest statement, to me, again, I did look at the
17 interest statement and, on this particular one, there was a
18 lot of good information in terms of history and history of
19 the State and the different - mainly statements about the
20 general political environment of the State and the history
21 of the neighborhood that he is living in, anyway, so I did
22 look at the interest statement, but I did not find a direct
23 relationship between what was there and what was in response
24 to the requirements, basically.

25 MS. SPANO: Okay. Are you finished? I am going

1 to continue? Okay. You noted that he had a neutral
2 response and that you could go either way, well, when I was
3 reading this, and I had a chance to look at other candidate
4 responses, so comparing one to another, I think his
5 responses were just general. He provided a general example,
6 there was not a lot of detail, he was not strong, he cites
7 his job as a requirement for impartiality, he cites the
8 belief that he could demonstrate, but he does not tell you
9 how he could demonstrate, and so I did not think it was
10 enough to propel him as a retain to move forward and look
11 further.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah, I agree that this was
13 general, but there was one other example that this
14 individual used, which was in the first paragraph in the
15 response to that 800, where he discusses being on a jury in
16 a trial. To me, serving on a jury is credible and it is a
17 public service, of course, but there are certain
18 requirements that apply in successful - carrying out the
19 responsibilities of the jury, so being a juror was one of my
20 reasons, or when it swayed my judgment towards a yes for
21 this individual, that they have some exposure in an
22 environment where they had to set aside their personal
23 opinions and just follow the Judge's rule. So this was, in
24 general, being on a jury was an indication of a good example
25 for me.

1 MS. SPANO: Okay - I am sorry, Mary.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: In the sense of the jury, I
3 thought it was, yes, he was on a jury, I agree with Kerri in
4 the sense of this individual provided comments and no really
5 clear example because there were some other Applicants that
6 I saw that provided what occurred during the jury and how
7 they were able to be impartial, where this individual did
8 not really kind of expand upon it. He had the opportunity
9 to, but just - it was not there.

10 MS. SPANO: Yeah. I think what I am looking at
11 with these impartiality responses, there are candidates that
12 can demonstrate specifically how they experienced or how
13 they demonstrated impartiality, and they will list a great
14 example, and then at the end of the list, you know, "I
15 served on a jury" in general terms, and then that is fine
16 because they, to me, demonstrated in another example. This
17 person, to me, when he described that he was on a jury, did
18 not quite go into the significance of other than "I was
19 required to be impartial because the Judge told me so," and
20 it did not really sell it for me as a good example of
21 demonstrating. That is just how I evaluated it.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Is there anything else
23 on the impartiality that you guys want to discuss? Or -

24 MS. SPANO: No.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: So the next one was the 805, which

1 is appreciation for California's diverse demographics and
2 geography. Again, for this individual, I thought he
3 provided a very thorough and thoughtful response to this
4 requirement and for that reason I said yes. To be specific,
5 the individual talks about the State's demographics and
6 population diversity. Again, the part that made this
7 difficult for me to say no was that the response does
8 mention the diversity in the State, and the different groups
9 of people living in the State, and the geographic diversity.
10 But the part that did not help me make the "yes" decision
11 easily was the response does not relate the diversity with
12 the political preferences, so that was lacking.

13 MS. SPANO: I have to agree with you.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Maybe that is why you said no to
15 this one.

16 MS. SPANO: I said no because they did not meet
17 all the elements of diversity. A lot of people recognized
18 different geography and demographics of the State, but they
19 failed to understand and make the connection to the
20 electoral process and the importance of the VRA, and because
21 of that, and - but at this time when I am looking at this
22 application, I still have not ruled him out yet because I am
23 looking at other responses, still, to see if he is deficient
24 in responding in this one area, is there another area he
25 will make up for that and fulfill the remaining requirements

1 in diversity? So, at this time, he only met two out of so
2 many of the diversity requirements in the Regs, so I thought
3 it was weak, in general.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: In the sense of this
5 particular Applicant's diversity response, I did not see
6 really any personal involvement, I saw the he provided
7 comments about traveling here and there, saying that there
8 is rich and poor within California, there is this type of
9 individuals, these ethnicities within California, but I did
10 not really see any personal involvement where the individual
11 was really actively going out there and participating in
12 this diversity, and in really explaining it to me. They did
13 not really provide an understanding of what these different
14 California diversities wanted and even needed, they did not
15 kind of really show me that.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Now that I look back at the
17 response, I agree with you. And I will continue to look
18 back at the responses. One other thing that is probably a
19 good example to just share with you guys, I do not know if
20 you guys noticed, that this individual refers, or the
21 response to the Franchise Tax Board as one of the
22 responsibilities for the Commission, and my take on that was
23 that this is just merely a human error, maybe in typing
24 Board of Equalization instead -- of typing Franchise Tax
25 Board instead of Board of Equalization. And I give the

1 Applicant the benefit of the doubt that this could be a
2 typo, an unintentional error. But it was there, so I am
3 looking to that level of detail. And I am sure you guys
4 noticed that, too.

5 MS. SPANO: Yes.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. So are we ready to move
8 forward to the last requirement, Develop Analytical Skills,
9 Essay 4?

10 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes.

11 MS. SPANO: Yes.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, do you want to start, Kerri?

13 MS. SPANO: Oh, okay.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Or do you want me to start?

15 MS. SPANO: Go ahead.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

17 MS. SPANO: Since you were starting before.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure. Again, under the "Other
19 Relevant Material," the Applicant makes a statement that
20 made me a little uneasy, the Applicant says that he is weak
21 in mathematical skills and that, if he is exposed to a
22 situation, he is confident that he is going to learn fast
23 and run. He is not using the same words, those are my
24 words, but that is the message that I got from reading that
25 response. And then I related that to analytical skills in

1 response to Requirement 6 under Regulation 60827. In
2 looking at the essay question and response to that
3 requirement, I found that borderline, again. It was not
4 superb, it was not sufficient to say no. At this point, I
5 also looked at the individual's responsibilities in the
6 past, the type of work that this individual did, the type of
7 decisions that this individual made, and all of those were
8 positive. The individual did not complete, I believe, if I
9 remember correctly, the individual did not have a diploma,
10 but Bill Gates does not have a diploma, so that did not
11 affect me in a negative way, but then I looked at the
12 education and experience, together, and this individual had
13 a lot of good experience in terms of, you know, being in
14 charge of a major program, major IT program, I believe, I do
15 not have all my details here organized, but if I can find
16 it, I will share with you. But generally speaking, he was a
17 Systems Engineer, which had hundreds of computers and
18 hundreds of personnel that he managed, and the individual
19 was also in charge of a very significant Federal program.
20 And, as you know, whenever you have Federal programs, you
21 have legal requirements, so that implies to me that the
22 individual has to have had some exposure to the legal
23 requirements or an environment where he had to be in
24 compliance with certain detailed legal requirements to be
25 successful in those positions. So the response to the Essay

1 4 was not sufficient in itself, but it was my own assessment
2 of other - based on the facts on the other part of the
3 application that helped me to - or that convinced me that I
4 should keep this individual for now, and then we can come
5 back and look at it again, of course.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: This individual, in the sense
7 of analytical skills, I was impressed with his computer
8 skills because I am sure you probably, since he has
9 incorporated hundreds of computers, that he is probably very
10 - and he is a Systems Engineer, he is probably a very high
11 functioning individual with computers, that is what I am
12 thinking. I also, at his church activities he worked in
13 group meetings, so he was able to work in teams, that was
14 shown in his job, and outside commitments, and he was able
15 to show that he could gather and understand information and
16 interpret it. So I thought he was able to meet the
17 analytical skills.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you.

19 MS. SPANO: I think, at this point, when I got to
20 his response, I just found it hard to follow. I did not
21 think he was the best communicator. I know that his
22 computer skills were important because he was a technician,
23 he did do that, and he can probably get along in a team
24 environment, but it was not enough for me, I think, when you
25 compare it to the strengths of the other candidates who I

1 clearly did want to remain in the pool. I did not think he
2 was competitive enough to stay, but still not done looking
3 at the application. So those are my thoughts.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: All right, thank you, Kerri, thank
5 you, Mary. Do you guys want to talk more about this
6 example, or we can move forward.

7 MS. SPANO: I kind of would like to go into - do
8 you want to go into the letters of recommendation?

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure.

10 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Sure.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Go ahead.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: One thing that I did notice
13 with this individual is all three letters of recommendation
14 came from one source. It would have been nice to see them
15 from different sources, and I know this individual, I think,
16 is retired, but it would have been nice to see different
17 sources so you can get different perspectives of this
18 particular Applicant. And I did not get that from these
19 letters of recommendation.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: I agree.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And they were also -

22 CHAIR AHMADI: And if I could just add a comment,
23 why I agree is, when I looked at the letters of
24 recommendation, I tried to relate the statements of the
25 recommendations they made, again, to the minimum

1 qualifications. And I put my own tech mark of putting
2 different Code Sections next to each statement that they
3 made on some of the individuals. And, again, it is using
4 that information to benefit me in terms of, you know, how
5 easy it makes it for me to make that decision, and doing
6 that is not easy sometimes, it is just the most difficult
7 decision that you would make. And so I tried to relate the
8 information from the letters of recommendation to the
9 minimum qualifications, and for this individual, most of the
10 information did not tell much about those minimum
11 qualifications, and the fact that they have come from the
12 same source could be a cause for that, and maybe there is
13 value in situations where we have letters of recommendation
14 coming from different sources or from individuals with
15 different backgrounds, they probably provide more -

16 MS. SPANO: Depth.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: -- depth in terms of how you relate
18 that information to the individual's compliance with those
19 requirements.

20 MS. SPANO: I agree. I agree with both of you. I
21 came across that same conclusion and it just felt like - I
22 just also want to say, I did look at each of these for this
23 individual in his Response to other Information, and it did
24 not help him at all. It did not help him with supporting
25 the deficiencies in his other responses, and together with

1 the letters of recommendation, I felt like this did not
2 strengthen his standing to remain in the pool.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Did you want to add
4 anything else, Mary? I am sorry for cutting you -

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No, no, that is fine.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: So it looks like we can move
7 forward to the next example. So the next example we have is
8 for Octavio Gonzales. And for this individual, I said
9 insufficient information, or no for requirements related to
10 analytical skills, which is 60827, and the reason I said no
11 was that the information in his response to that question,
12 or the information on the application, any part of the
13 application, did not help me make a yes decision easily. It
14 was clear to me that this individual will have challenges
15 for the type of work that the Commission is charged to do,
16 in terms of, you know, learning abilities to do the job.
17 So, for that reason, I said no for that reason.

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Nasir -

19 CHAIR AHMADI: We can go back to the order?

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: For this individual, you are
21 saying that the analytical skills were weak? I just wanted
22 to clarify and understand.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: My comment on the public, the
24 spreadsheet here, says something like no for Regulation
25 60827. And that is related to the Relevant Analytical

1 Skills, but of course, when I made those comments, I tried
2 to focus on the main reason why I said no to this
3 individual, for example. So that does not mean that
4 everything else was fine, the individual may have had good
5 on measurable demonstration of impartiality, and in most
6 cases the individuals were able to do that, their responses
7 reflected that kind of ability, and individuals may have
8 excellent demonstration of meeting the requirement under
9 60805, Diversity, but this was the reason why I said no to
10 this Applicant.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay, so when we go through
12 this, if there is any other areas that you thought this
13 Applicant was weak, then we will discuss those?

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. I gave this Applicant
16 a favorable response.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, what about you, Kerri?

18 MS. SPANO: Oh, I am sorry, I did not move him
19 forward. I did not think he was competitive enough to stay
20 in the pool. I thought that he generally did not
21 demonstrate his impartiality response, I thought it was weak
22 in demonstrating his diversity appreciation, his analytical
23 was good, but not good enough for me to stay in the pool, as
24 well as his employment history, although his letters of
25 recommendation were good, I did not think it strengthened

1 his position, for me. And generally what I got out of the
2 candidate, that he is a good student, basically, and I did
3 get that throughout, he is educated in a lot of the relevant
4 information to Commission work, the voters, for example, but
5 I just did not think he had what it took to be among the
6 most qualified at this time.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Where I thought he brought -
8 to have me say he was a favorable response, he was not, like
9 Nasir was saying, I had three pools, I had ones that were
10 responses that just hit every mark, that just were stellar,
11 I had other ones that were okay, hey, you hit most of the
12 marks, oh, this is great, and then I had other ones that,
13 hey, you hit most of them, some of them were weak, this was
14 one of them, however, I thought he just brought a different
15 perspective and that is kind of what I liked about him. He
16 has only been out of college for four years, so obviously
17 you are not going to have a huge employment history, and
18 that is kind of what I looked at there. I noticed that he
19 also did analyze some voter information in Rhode Island, so
20 some of their work, they also have some - he works currently
21 at the Stanford Law School Legal Clinic, he is a Legal
22 Assistant, so I thought, okay, he brought in that aspect of
23 the analytical skills. I also thought he had great work
24 with the different types of demographics within California.
25 Also, in the sense of his - where is it - his demographics

1 in Geography, he brought some aspects of things that people
2 would not normally see out in the open, he understood his
3 community is changing, and he brought that in to the mix, so
4 I thought that was kind of good. In the sense of the
5 letters or recommendation -

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Before we get to the letters of
7 recommendation, Mary, I am sorry, let's spend a little more
8 time here because I just want to make sure that I understood
9 your points, those are great points.

10 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Sure. Okay. Did you want to
11 go question-by-question?

12 CHAIR AHMADI: If I can just share with you some
13 of my thoughts on this one and see if you saw the same thing
14 or if you took it differently, that is what I want to see if
15 I can get from this discussion. So, for Essay 1, for
16 example, again, Essay 1, as Kerri suggested, it is not a
17 requirement under the law for them to provide any Interest
18 in Statement, but it is where I go first, to see why are
19 they interested in this process, what is in it for them, in
20 other words, how they can benefit, and if they are committed
21 to this kind of challenging work. I did not see that
22 statement. It was a very long response, but the message was
23 not that clear in terms of, you know, how this relates to
24 the minimum qualifications, the type of work that the
25 individual would do. Let me just focus on the last

1 paragraph in that response, which was when I initially
2 started reviewing the application, I go to the Interest
3 statement first, and then I continue reading, and I refer to
4 education and work experience, and then I look at, you know,
5 other activities the individual has, as I mentioned, you
6 know, financial contributions and all that, so I kind of
7 like work my way through the application that way. So when
8 I came across the first statement, that kind of caused me to
9 pause a little bit, was the individual says, "As a young
10 person, I have the flexibility and time to devote myself to
11 the duties of being a Commissioner," and then he continues
12 on to say, "I am just familiar with the concept of applying
13 legal principals," so it tells me a little bit about maybe
14 some limitations, maybe not, I do not know. But when I look
15 at the essay responses, Mary, I did not only search for
16 positive, but also looked for is there any statement that
17 causes me to pause and say, is the response just that there
18 may be some limitations in terms of individuals' ability or
19 experience or ability to face the challenges of the type of
20 work that the Commission is charged to do. So that was one
21 area that kind of -

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So you are saying, "As a
23 young person, I have the flexibility and time," is that
24 where you are saying that you have a concern?

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Within the context of the response

1 to the Essay 1, which was Interest in Statement, my
2 perception, or the information implied to me that there is
3 not much demonstration about how this individual meets the
4 requirements, all the requirements, or any of the
5 requirements. And it was too general. It is nice
6 statements, but it is not directly related to any of the
7 requirements. At least, that is how I interpreted that.

8 MS. SPANO: Well when -- I looked at it maybe a
9 little different than both of you.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, let's hear that.

11 MS. SPANO: I think, you know, this is his "why do
12 I want to be President" kind of speech here, and I look at
13 it from, okay, he says that, let's see, he has got an
14 understanding of ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic
15 diversity of particular communities. That is something I
16 want to be looking out for as I read in his responses. That
17 is something, okay, you said you did it, it said you had it,
18 I want to see where you demonstrate it. He says later on,
19 "I've got tools of critical analyses to serve on the
20 Commission." Okay, that's great, I want to see how and
21 where. And so that is what I am going to be looking for. I
22 go down along his last statement that you read, he can work
23 effectively in large groups, and come to a consensus, okay,
24 that is great, that is a great quality, that is important to
25 me and it is part of the Regs. How are you going to

1 demonstrate that? I want to see, explain it to me, and show
2 me how. And he is working in the legal field, okay, oh, you
3 have got legal skills, well, tell me how. What did you do?
4 So this is the kind of response that kind of sets a map of
5 what I expect to see and what more I want to see in a
6 response, and if they do not explain to me how they did
7 this, then I do not think they can meet the qualifications,
8 and so - that is just me because I know that they cannot
9 explain everything and how they meet it in this question,
10 but it kind of gives me a sense of what to expect later on
11 in the essay.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: I agree. And maybe I should
13 clarify what I just said in my kind of like summary of my
14 take on this response. After I looked at the entire
15 application, after I looked at the experiences and
16 demonstration or whether or not there is a demonstration of
17 those abilities, I came back to this one, and that is when I
18 found that these are all general statements. For example, I
19 think that initially when you read the Interest in Statement
20 without looking at the remaining application, you will have
21 a different perception of this person's ability, then when
22 you have a chance to look at the entire application, or the
23 entire package, and then come back to it, because if you do
24 that, and I did that, I found that the information here is
25 high level without any solid demonstration of those

1 abilities. The understanding is there, I mean, he talks
2 about what these requirements are, but does this individual
3 demonstrate through his response that they have the capacity
4 to do the job? And my vote was maybe not. So...

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And my feeling in the sense
6 of the first question, it is kind of along the lines of
7 Kerri, however, it is a little bit different. I will sit
8 here and read these, and if they give me any nuggets in here
9 that deals with the qualifications, I will take those. So
10 if they are giving me anything in depth, not just comments
11 or statements, or history. We did receive a lot of history
12 lessons in this. Those, I would take along.

13 MS. SPANO: I did that, as well. Maybe I was
14 unclear about that. If they gave me a nugget and it
15 applied, I kept it in the back of my head, and I would write
16 in my comments "applies to number two, Diversity," or, you
17 know, because they are all over the place. Anywhere these
18 Applicants can free-write, I consider anything they say.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Let's talk about, kind of dig in a
20 little bit from this application and talk about something,
21 in general, that I had in the back of my mind, and I was
22 hoping that we have an appreciation to talk about that, is
23 related to what Kerri just said, and this destination that I
24 understand your perception of a situation where the
25 Applicant is not able to focus on particular areas of the

1 requirement, to summarize their response in that one essay
2 vs. an individual who you have to go through and try to
3 interpret for them from the response, so in other words,
4 what is your take on an application where the information is
5 scattered all throughout the application, and there is no
6 focused statements in response to each of these clearly
7 different requirements?

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And at this point in time, to
9 get to this level, what I did was, if they gave me something
10 in one of these questions, and if it was not really focused
11 or direct in addressing that particular question, I still
12 gave them credit; however, when I go back and look at them
13 again, I am going to take a look at them at a little bit
14 more detail and really consider them in that respect and I
15 agree -

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Consider that factor as part of
17 your decision-making?

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes, in the sense of their
19 thought process. First off, I was looking at, do they meet
20 these qualifications? You know, they can write - we are
21 just talking about basic writing and stuff, now I am going
22 to go in and say, "Okay, you have given me these nuggets,
23 now let me see how you put these nuggets together."

24 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, and that falls under one of
25 the requirements, analytical skills, again, effective

1 communication skills, for example. So to me, an individual
2 who can provide a clear, concise, to the point essay
3 response to one of these obvious requirements will give me -
4 will tell me a lot about their abilities to meet that
5 requirement, than an individual whose application does not
6 tell me that they have it in one place, in other words, it
7 is scattered all over the application.

8 MS. SPANO: If it is like a shotgun approach and
9 somebody just puts it all out there, does not even give any
10 thought to - does that apply to number two? Does it apply
11 to number three, number 4? I am inclined to take them out
12 of the pool unless they are stellar and they can really
13 write well, if I cannot follow it, you are out because I
14 should not have to struggle through, in my opinion, through
15 their responses. I am thinking that, if you are in a
16 meeting and you are a Commissioner, and you have got people
17 coming to you with these different communities of interest,
18 are you going to be able to follow and interpret that? Or
19 are you going to have a hard time explaining that to your
20 panel, to your fellow Commissioners as you decide whether
21 this issue is important enough that effects drawing the
22 lines, or whatever, I am just making an example here, but if
23 they cannot communicate clearly, to me, at this point in the
24 game where I am considering them among the most qualified at
25 this time, then for me they are not going to stay.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: That is a weakness?

2 MS. SPANO: It is a weakness for me, however, a
3 lot of times Applicants have a story to tell, they said, "I
4 was involved in a program or a project," and it will hit in
5 all the other areas. That is okay for me, but when they
6 just throw information out there, you have got a lot of
7 irrelevant and some relevant information that they are
8 trying to meet, that is not going to propel them in staying
9 in the pool for me. Let me know if that is fair. Does that
10 make sense?

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yeah. If the Applicant - if
12 I was not able to follow them, and it was not clear, yes, I
13 did not move them forward. However, if I was able to read
14 through this and gain some insight to this person and say,
15 you know, you do meet these minimum qualifications, and
16 those I moved forward for the - compared to others. Now,
17 what I am planning on doing, just kind of like what you were
18 saying about the other Applicant, is going to compare this
19 person to all the others.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Correct, correct. Okay, thank you
21 so much. Sorry for distracting you from discussing the
22 specifics on this one. So did we cover number two on this
23 one? On Octavio Gonzales? Number two was the impartiality
24 statement.

25 VICE CHAIR COMACHO: Number two, I did not feel

1 that this was a very strong response for this particular
2 Applicant. They did provide some information, they did go
3 out and did take a look at some external information and
4 interpreted that, so I did see that, but I did not really
5 see a - I saw kind of a weak impartiality response.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: I agree that the response to this
7 essay was weak, to me, in my interpretation, and there was
8 no demonstration of abilities to tell me that they can be
9 impartial. How about you, Kerri?

10 MS. SPANO: Same thing, did not demonstrate well,
11 besides the understanding of the principals of
12 redistricting, acknowledges willingness to be impartial, but
13 does not give me an example of it. So it did not do it for
14 me.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. I also used this essay to
16 kind of interpret for myself the individual's communication
17 skills, written communication skills. The individual quotes
18 from a book or an article? Three points. In his opening
19 statement - sentence, that there are three major factors
20 that he thinks is important for the Commission, and then he
21 does not talk about all three, he just talks about one and
22 two, it is those first and second, and then says, "All these
23 three are suggesting," so, to me, maybe the individual
24 forgot to cut and paste that one last paragraph, or maybe
25 this was intentional, I do not know. But, again, in going

1 back to the discussion that we just had, effective
2 communication skills is part of the requirements in the law,
3 and it has to be there for the response to be ideal. I
4 wanted to use that as an example.

5 The next essay number three is related to the
6 diversity, 60805. Again, my take on that was insufficient.
7 The demonstration was not there. It was good, but not
8 ideal, put it this way.

9 MS. SPANO: My thoughts on this guy, diversity, he
10 mentions in the very beginning, he has seen diversity in the
11 changes of the make-up of his neighborhood over the years,
12 that is great that he has seen these changes, he is aware of
13 the demographic diversity, with no sufficient explanation of
14 appreciation. He says it has changed, it has changed, these
15 different ethnic groups that have entered the neighborhood,
16 and that is it. He does not relate the significance of his
17 appreciation, if any, to political preferences among shared
18 demographic characteristics, or the ability of the
19 unrepresented participation in the electoral process. So I
20 felt like he did not really quite demonstrate adequately
21 enough to remain as among the most qualified.

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: This individual did bring
23 some insight into where he was, where he came, he also had
24 some information in his question 1 that could be brought up
25 in this instance of demographics, you know, in the sense of

1 being a volunteer, manager of a volunteer interpreter
2 program. He did not go further into that in the sense of
3 what type of interpreters, was it all within his race? Or
4 was it different? However, that, I thought, was good
5 because he had worked with different individuals. In the
6 sense of where he worked, I thought that kind of gave a
7 little bit more in the sense for the diversity. And I
8 thought he brought a good mix.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so obviously we have rated
10 this response differently. To me, just to share with you my
11 thought, the first paragraph is just a history lesson, it is
12 just a history of the neighborhood. The second paragraph
13 has nothing to do with 805, it is just an illustration of
14 California's diverse neighborhoods. Well, it has some
15 indication of some names for these different localities in
16 California. The third paragraph is where I first see some
17 statements that relates to this requirement, where it
18 again, it is very general and there is no demonstration of
19 personal experiences or abilities to relate the different
20 localities within the State to the political preferences as
21 it relates to the electoral process. The general thing that
22 I found was, for example, "We are the county's most
23 important agricultural producer...", I am just using this as
24 an example, "...home of the fertile Central Valley, yet we are
25 also the home of high tech start-up companies in Silicon

1 Valley. We are a State that continues to wrestle in
2 defining American culture, exemplified in 1986 when we voted
3 to make English the State's official language." So those
4 statements, again, relate to the history or an indication of
5 the individual's knowledge about the history of California,
6 but it does not tell me much about the requirements, which
7 is do you understand how the Commission work will be
8 affected, or how the Commission has to take into
9 consideration in the decision-making process how different
10 localities within the State relate to the political process,
11 basically, in terms of representation in the State. So at
12 least, just to share with you, those are kind of like some
13 of the thoughts that I had on this one.

14 MS. SPANO: I pretty much saw the same thing for
15 each paragraph that you said, those are my notes almost
16 exactly.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: I am glad that we feel the same
18 way.

19 MS. SPANO: And I did want to add something a
20 little different, not applicable to this Applicant, but I
21 notice that some Applicants, when they say they appreciate
22 diversity, they live next door to this race, this ethnicity,
23 this person, i.e., unlike these different ethnic groups, and
24 that shows my appreciation. That really does not sell me on
25 their appreciation for diversity. And I have seen a few

1 like that, who were, you know, I should not have put it in
2 there, it is not relevant to me.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: It is good information, but it does
4 not help me make the decision faster in terms of - I want to
5 be comfortable when I make those decisions, these are
6 difficult, believe me, that the most challenging aspect of
7 what I do right now is the fear of making a mistake in my
8 decisions, and sometimes I find myself going back again and
9 again to an application, to a part of an application, and
10 trying to make sure that I understand what they are saying,
11 and sometimes I ask my assistant, like, "help me out, is
12 this how you read this and you interpret this information?"
13 So, I agree, you know, it is good information, but, again, I
14 think what makes it easier for all of us, for the three of
15 us, is to tie it back to the regulation.

16 MS. SPANO: Always.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Did they respond in a way that
18 helps me understand whether or not they meet those
19 requirements? You know, if the answer is yes, obviously
20 that is favorable, or an ideal response.

21 So shall we move on to the next one, then?

22 MS. SPANO: Yes. Mary? Mary, are you ready?

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yeah.

24 MS. SPANO: Okay, I thought you wanted to say
25 something.

1 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No, I am ready.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: So the last requirement, analytical
3 skills, my take on this one was insufficient. And, of
4 course, to the extent that I need to go into detail, I will,
5 but I think we will see how each one of us rated this one.
6 Mine was insufficient.

7 MR. LEVIN: Would you mind just state the
8 Applicant names -

9 CHAIR AHMADI: You want me to repeat the names?

10 MR. LEVIN: Just for this Applicant.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Oh, this one was Octavio Gonzales.
12 Yeah, he is from Redwood City, California. And this is an
13 individual that I said no to, and Mary said yes, and Kerri
14 said no - or unfavorable vs. favorable. So he is one of the
15 Applicants who received a single favorable vote.

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: When I went through this
17 individual, I saw that he was able to gather and comprehend
18 information in the sense of the analyzing the precincts map,
19 voter rules, and other data sets. He also brought some
20 information in from Question 1, he had legal information in
21 there, and he also evaluated and validated some information
22 from -

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Where did you see the legal
24 information, Mary?

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: The legal information was on

1 the third paragraph -

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Oh, okay.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: The first sentence.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: "In my professional capacity as the
5 Mills Legal Clinic at Stanford Law School, I have a working
6 knowledge of the application of legal principals."

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And then also when you go
8 into look at his job statement, "conformed and filed legal
9 documents in State, District, and Appellate Courts, filed
10 immigration applications, including..." so he has - I kind of
11 also went and - kind of like what I was saying, if there was
12 any other additional information that could help me out with
13 his qualifications, I would go into the employment
14 information.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you. So, again, for
16 me, since he mentioned the legal, for example, I am using
17 this as an example again to share my thoughts with you guys.

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: There was also one thing -
19 also, in the provide any other relevant group - it was not
20 explicit, however, when he - he had some presentations, he
21 was a panelist for honoring human dignity and the common
22 good, so that kind of demonstrated in some sort of degree
23 that he was able to work in a group because, obviously, to
24 chair panelists, you are going to have to work together on
25 that.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, and, again, my interpretation
2 of the information related to his involvement with legal
3 requirements or legal principals was that, in his position
4 he is just referring - his responsibility is to refer
5 clients who do not speak English to an attorney. So, to me,
6 you know, there is some - you have to interpret that data to
7 see what that enabled the individual to make - to use the
8 experience that they have for the benefit of the Commission
9 or not. And to me, again, it is a good example to talk
10 about here, it is great experience that the individual has,
11 and I appreciate that, it is helping people, it is trying to
12 - I am assuming that, in the process of referring somebody
13 to legal counsel, that they will have to have some knowledge
14 or at least basic knowledge of, you know, what the legal
15 issues are and what type of services the individual needs.
16 But I was looking for a little more than that, for example,
17 that the issue of legal conservation or legal concepts
18 related to Commission work is more, I believe, directed
19 towards how the Federal laws and the State laws limits or
20 guides the work of the Commission in terms of both the
21 requirements that are there, and the limitations that are
22 there, in terms of redrawing these lines, so Applicants who
23 had that kind of information in their response.

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What you are kind of
25 referring to is just, for example, within these documents,

1 so it is not the only thing, and that is kind of what I
2 looked at is I looked at other areas where if they were able
3 to interpret legal, they did not have to look at the
4 redistricting, or they did not have to be familiar with the
5 Voting Right Act, so that is kind of what I looked at.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah, some of these are multiple-
7 fold in terms of enabling an individual to perform better,
8 of course.

9 MS. SPANO: I think he had a strong academic
10 understanding of Commission work and overall I did not see
11 an association with that. I just did not think he had
12 enough information in his response to remain in the pool. I
13 did not think he was good enough or competitive enough to
14 stay in.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: I agree. It sounds like you and I
16 agree more on some of these concepts, so that is good, at
17 least.

18 MS. SPANO: And I think, at this point, you know,
19 we clearly understood there were some Applicants that
20 clearly needed to be removed from the pool, and then there
21 were some where you had to compare them to the strongest one
22 and tell yourself, "Could they remain competitive in the
23 next round?" And I felt this one could not. So he was
24 removed.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Mary, did you have anything else on

1 number 4 - I am sorry for stopping you a couple of times,
2 but -

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No, that is - four, I have
4 gone through four.

5 CHAIR AMADI: You are done with that, okay, thank
6 you. How about any other parts of this application? Do you
7 guys think there is something else that we should discuss to
8 help us better understand the criteria that we are
9 following?

10 MS. SPANO: I think he is well respected by his
11 professors and the sources in his letters of recommendation,
12 but it was not enough to convince me to have him remain in
13 the pool.

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And one thing I did like
15 about this individual's letters of recommendation was, you
16 know, you had one that was a college professor, this
17 individual was just out of college four years ago, so
18 obviously you are not going to have a lot of employer -
19 prior employer information where they give recommendation,
20 so he did what he could. He also had a college friend that
21 knew him and provided some examples in his recommendation,
22 and then also he received a recommendation from his current
23 job. But there is one thing I did - it was hard for me to
24 determine with the recommendation on his current job, I was
25 not sure this was one of the people - I was not sure how

1 this recommendation fits in, so how was this recommender
2 related to the Applicant? Was it a co-worker? I was not
3 sure.

4 MS. SPANO: Which one?

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: The individual, oh, my
6 goodness, from the Stanford Law School. Is this the clinic
7 work?

8 CHAIR AHMADI: I think that is the individual who
9 knew Applicant in college, Director of a campaign,
10 Organizing for America.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So that was the only thing
12 that I could say about that one.

13 MS. SPANO: It sounds to me - what I interpreted
14 it is that he directs, is a Director of some sort, of the
15 Immigrants Rights Clinic.

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I was not sure if it was a
17 direct supervisor or what.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Good, anything else you want to
19 talk about on this one?

20 MS. SPANO: I think we covered him.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yeah, okay.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. One last thing that I
23 wanted to share with you guys, and just to share with you my
24 review process, and to the extent at which I look at the
25 details, for example. On this application, I noticed that

1 the individual responds to voting information -

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Excuse me, Nasir, when you
3 are saying "this application," are you talking about the
4 next one or are we still talking about -

5 CHAIR AHMADI: No, we are still talking about the
6 same one. With this one, I just want to share one last talk
7 on this, just to bring us on the same page about, you know,
8 the level of detail that I am looking at these. In response
9 to the voting information, the response is yes, and then the
10 listing is questionable, it says, "In 2004, Los Angeles
11 County 432 S. Chicago Street, Los Angeles, California," or
12 18037 -

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Is that his address?

14 CHAIR AHMADI: No, this is the voting location,
15 where the individual voted.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Oh, okay.

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What page are you on?

18 CHAIR AHMADI: This is page 14, on top of page 14,
19 this is an example that I wanted to go to next, it is - let
20 me read the question just to clarify, I am sorry, it says,
21 "If yes, for each of the elections in which you voted, list
22 the date of the election, the County in which you voted, and
23 the name and address that you used." Oh, I am sorry, this
24 was the name and address, and I apologize.

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Let's not talk about

1 addresses.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah, sorry about that. But there
3 was some discrepancy in the information I wanted to share,
4 but - so, sorry about that.

5 MS. SPANO: Was there a concern about the
6 addresses or the location?

7 CHAIR AHMADI: The location does not match.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Well, in the sense of this
9 person could have voted absentee, we are just unsure.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: I take it back and I did not
11 realize it, I apologize.

12 MS. SPANO: Mary? you were wondering what the
13 relationship was of that Applicant's letter, and when you
14 look at the job history for that Applicant, in the job
15 history it lists that name of the Director -

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I do not think it was the
17 same person, was it? Oh, yeah, it is. It is the same
18 person.

19 MS. SPANO: It is the same person?

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yep.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Do you want us to move forward? Or
22 do you guys want to take a 10-minute break? It is almost
23 about 2:00. Shall we just move forward?

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I suggest we move forward.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. The next one we have, we

1 have two to go for our examples, and then we will move on to
2 the agenda, of course.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: This is on the agenda.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: This is, but other agenda items.

5 Thank you, Stephanie. So the next individual that we have
6 in our example to discuss is Gracie Madrid. And, again, my
7 vote or my judgment on this one was that it was not the most
8 qualified, so I voted no for this one. How about you,
9 Kerri?

10 MS. SPANO: Favorable for me, she stayed in.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I also did favorable.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so as I said, I mentioned
13 that this was not the most qualified for me, and I have a
14 reason to say that, because, again, this is one of my middle
15 ground applications, it was not so obvious for me to say,
16 yes, this is the most qualified, let's move forward, but
17 neither was it that weak in terms of responses to those
18 essay questions, that it would make me say no to this
19 individual. So my initial rating on this one was good, but
20 then when I compared to the rest of the pool, I said not
21 most qualified. And the reason I said that is this is a
22 difficult one to discuss in terms of our example here
23 because you can argue about the details that we have here.
24 I think it is a judgment call, for the most part, based on
25 the facts and it also depends on how you interpret the

1 information specific to 60805, so - how you identify with
2 diversity, appreciation for California's diverse
3 demographics.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So you were thinking she was
5 a little weak on the California diversity section?

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. Where I saw was she
8 provided such a vivid example of her taking the effort to go
9 out to her students' homes where it was not even her race,
10 so it was a different race than her, and what the outcome
11 was, so I thought that was just a very good example for
12 that.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: I agree, but that is impartiality,
14 right? We are talking about that example, within the
15 context of how the individual is able to be impartial?

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No, in the sense of
17 demographics.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Appreciation for California's
19 diverse demographics.

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes, understanding that are
21 different ones, they are not afraid to go out to other races
22 and embrace them, and that is what I felt she did, showing
23 that.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, now let's talk about that
25 because, when I look at the response to 805, I am looking

1 for some statements that tells me, 1) that the individual
2 understands the makeup of the State in terms of both
3 differences in populations or the demographic diversity of
4 the State, and 2) geographic diversity in the State, and
5 then the other part of my assessment will involve whether or
6 not a perception or making judgment on the fact whether or
7 not the individual demonstrated to me that, not only did he
8 understand that there are diverse groups within the State,
9 depending on different localities, but also these diverse
10 groups have different needs, and that geography has
11 something to do with how people live in different locations,
12 and how their needs vary, or how their needs shape based on
13 those geographic factors.

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I agree with you. It is kind
15 of like what Mr. Levin was saying, that the Applicants only
16 really have 500 words to state everything, and there was a
17 lot of information to put down. I felt that this Applicant
18 provided some very vivid examples of her understanding of
19 diversity in the sense of going out and embracing them. She
20 does not give any examples in the sense of, you know, how do
21 they vote, what do they want, but I thought she showed that,
22 you know, with this particular one, to really get to know
23 what they want, she had to go out and visit the parents and
24 students.

25 MS. SPANO: I agree for this one. My overall

1 assessment for this candidate was fairly strong, I really
2 liked what she had to say and her experiences and what she
3 had to say. She was a 35-year administrator, she came from
4 - this is around the 1960s where she came from a different
5 state where she resided primarily in a rural area, and she
6 moved to California in the late '60s and she moved to this
7 whole other area where she is experiencing a whole different
8 ethnicity group, and she is a teacher. And she made an
9 effort, this woman, to get to know her students and the
10 people that she is serving, and to do that well. And to do
11 that, she had to go out and she made an effort to go out and
12 meet the parents of each of these students to understand who
13 these students were and how she can serve this population of
14 students, and you are talking a minority group, primarily,
15 very different from her minority and her ethnicity that she
16 was familiar, and I thought that showed that she has a
17 willingness to learn about others, embrace that, serve their
18 needs, understand their needs, and to me that shows a
19 potential for strong involvement in the community, trying to
20 understand someone's community of interest because that
21 student population, in order to be a good teacher, to serve
22 that student, you have to know a little bit about their
23 environment and where they live. And I thought that kind of
24 relates to diversity. And even though she made an example
25 just to focus on that one area where she was living, she was

1 successful at doing that, and she created other programs for
2 these needs because she knew that they did not have a lot of
3 - they did not have good health care, she looked at all
4 these other aspects of her students, not just taking it as a
5 job, but to serve a little bit more for these students and
6 make their lives better, and I thought - that said a lot to
7 me. I am not sure exactly where it fits in the Regs here,
8 but I know that when I was looking at it, I was very
9 impressed with her diversity skills because she told a story
10 in some way, spoke to them.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: No doubt that is great personality
12 and great effort to reach out, regardless of the race or
13 ethnicity, the different economic class, she, as you
14 mentioned, she moved to a new neighborhood and she found
15 herself in a new environment, and instead of rejecting it,
16 she accepted that and embraced that. But again, to me,
17 let's be careful here, to me, I am not disagreeing with the
18 fact that that is a good demonstration of a good aspect of
19 this person's personality that she reached out and tried to
20 learn and help within the community. In her position, she
21 was a teacher and she went to each of the homes of these
22 students that she had, which was African American, and she
23 is not, and a great value in that, no doubt. But my
24 interpretation of that was, again, more related to
25 impartiality of the individual, and that the individual has

1 embraced a different group, and therefore that tells me more
2 about the individual's ability to embrace impartiality or to
3 be impartial in the decision-making process. So that is my
4 interpretation, and I can see that, when you read through
5 those lines, sometimes it is difficult to make it specific
6 to one of these requirements, and we can certainly interpret
7 the information that way to the extent that it allows us to
8 use that information, to relate to that a requirement, but I
9 did not see any geographic discussion, or discussion about
10 the State's diverse geography in response to that question.
11 There was nothing about geography, nothing about - other
12 than mentioning that I moved to this new area, so -

13 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I agree with you, Nasir, in
14 the sense of the geographic. It was weak in that respect.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: It is not there. So when I was
16 reading the response, I was hoping that this individual will
17 touch on that, to say how the State - it is basically that
18 requirement, my interpretation of that requirement is that a
19 person who is charged with this huge responsibility that the
20 Commission will have, will have to be a person who
21 understands the State, not only in terms of different
22 localities, but in terms of who is living in the state, and
23 how they relate, and how they form their political
24 preferences, and what are some of the issues in the State.
25 So having that in mind when I look at the essay responses, I

1 try to get something from the response to help me make that
2 decision. And, again, on this one, I am sure that we are
3 going to go back to these applications and put our
4 microscopes again and look at them again. For this one,
5 unless I see something in addition, I will probably say that
6 this is probably not one of the most qualified. And as I
7 started on this one, I mentioned that this is good, but not
8 most qualified. So, to me, most qualified would be someone
9 whose response is clear enough for me to say, "Yeah, they
10 understand the State's diverse demographics and geography,
11 and not only do they understand, but they demonstrated to me
12 that they somehow can use that knowledge to their advantage
13 when they are assigned to this, you know, when they are
14 assigned to the Commission, for example. So that was the
15 basis for my judgment.

16 MS. SPANO: I think she shows potential, too. I
17 mean, that is just my opinion, from what I glean of it. It
18 is one example, it is in a specific location, and from her
19 efforts -

20 CHAIR AHMADI: I will look back at that.

21 MS. SPANO: I am going to revisit all of these
22 when I go back, but -

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And look at them with fresh
24 eyes.

25 MS. SPANO: Yeah, that is what I plan on doing.

1 Did we talk about impartiality with her ye?

2 CHAIR AHMADI: No, we did not because I jumped on
3 to this one because that was the basis for my decision.

4 MS. SPANO: Okay.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: In the other ones, if we want, we
6 can go back to number one, or where do you want to start?

7 MS. SPANO: Let's see -

8 CHAIR AHMADI: We can start on number one. I
9 think on number one, my take was it was a good response, it
10 was okay, not a superb in terms of, you know, relation of
11 the responses to the minimum qualifications, but the
12 statements were thoughtful and relevant to the work that she
13 is applying for.

14 MS. SPANO: No, I agree. I thought she had a good
15 understanding of the VRA and the CRC needs. It sounded like
16 she had a good ability to listen to others and their issues,
17 tried to give a nice intro to her.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. What about you, Mary?

19 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I agree with Kerri, with what
20 Kerri said.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: So we can go to number two, then?
22 For number two, again, my assessment of this response was it
23 is very good, it covered most of the areas that are filled
24 out in the requirement 60800, impartiality.

25 MS. SPANO: I liked her example, I thought it was

1 good.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Me, too.

3 MS. SPANO: Yeah.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I agree with both of you in
5 the sense of impartiality, that she was able to address
6 that.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, number three, we discussed,
8 and number four which is on analytical skills, again, my
9 take on this one was very good again. This individual
10 touched on various aspects of that requirement in terms of,
11 you know, having been exposed to situations, both in
12 personal experience and also in employment related
13 experience, she has had lots of responsibilities which have
14 exposed her to situations where she had to make decisions in
15 public settings and she is in charge of major programs, and
16 she is a principal in an elementary school, and then
17 teacher, and she moved to a new location, so she is very
18 active in terms of volunteer work and reaching out to
19 community needs. So my take was that, generally speaking,
20 the response for this requirement was very good.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I agree with you on
22 analytical skills.

23 MS. SPANO: I do, too. I thought this was her
24 strongest area. And I thought she did a better explanation
25 of describing her grand jury experience than the other

1 candidate.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, great, good to hear that.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: One thing I did want to point
4 out is that, on page 12, I really - it is question 5, or
5 essay question 5, I am sure all the Applicants know that
6 there were six essay questions, this one was number 5, what
7 I really liked about this essay question is she just did not
8 list the organizations she helped in, she also kind of
9 provided what she did in that organization, so that kind of
10 brought them more substance, to me. Because I would see
11 some Applicants that provide all these outstanding
12 accomplishments that they - or volunteer work that they were
13 in, but I never knew what exactly they did, so I could not
14 really give them credit for it.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: I agree.

16 MS. SPANO: I agree.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: And, again, to use this number five
18 essay as an example of, you know, the detail, one sentence
19 there that caused me to pause a little bit and kind of like
20 think and it slowed me down, was the statement about the
21 individual - this is in paragraph three - "I have assisted
22 candidates in non-partisan elections by helping candidates,"
23 but, well, before that, the Applicant says, "Political
24 activities include being a member of the Latino Democratic
25 Club, which raises funds and explores various community

1 issues, including supporting candidates who are running for
2 political offices - local political offices." This was a
3 little, to me, it was a little not a red flag, but it just
4 caused me to stop and say maybe - if I had moved this
5 individual forward, I would probably look more into this
6 issue to make sure that there is no issue about
7 impartiality, or maybe any conflict. That is the only kind
8 of like, you know, detail I wanted to talk about this, that
9 when we see statements like that, maybe that is when we look
10 at is there any impact or is the individual too much
11 involved with one specific group that may cause them to be
12 weak in impartiality. But that is, of course, based on
13 further looking into the detailed information.

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Right, and I agree. Since I
15 did see this, and I have seen, for example, letters of
16 recommendation, I have seen individuals that have received
17 letters of recommendation from current politicians and
18 former politicians, and you can kind of also go into that
19 respect, how impartial can they be? And that is something
20 that I would like to discuss after we go through all these,
21 a little bit more of how we should come to consensus on how
22 to look at those.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

24 MS. SPANO: I want to add something about her
25 activities. I do like how she describes it, I do not like

1 listers, people that just list their involvement on Boards
2 and Commissions, which does nothing for me as to explaining
3 their qualifications. This woman actually has a group where
4 she started and she recognizes minority achievements of the
5 underrepresented, and I thought that was applicable to
6 diversity.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Right, I agree.

8 MS. SPANO: So I thought that helped.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Did you want to talk about
10 letters of recommendation?

11 MS. SPANO: Yeah.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Before we get into that, on page
13 20, again, one very minute kind of like detail, but I just
14 wanted to see your take on that, the individual - actually,
15 no, we already talked about that, so I am sorry.

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: For the letters of
17 recommendation, what I really liked about her letters of
18 recommendation was, one was from another local government
19 official that she worked with while she was a principal and
20 the community work that they did together to serve a need.
21 Also, another recommendation was from a nonprofit
22 organization she, I think, volunteered at, and the last one
23 was from her prior job because I think she is retired. So I
24 thought that mix was really good, and the detail that they
25 put in here because they also added additional information

1 where, you know, with the limitation of 500 words for each
2 essay, this kind of added a little bit more.

3 MS. SPANO: I agree.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so anything else on this one
5 you guys want to discuss?

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I was wondering, could we
7 just take a break? Would that be okay?

8 MS. SPANO: Yes.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: It is about 2:07, so how about if we take a
10 10-minute, just stretch and get some fresh air and come back
11 at 2: -- let's see how my math works.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: At 2:17.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: At 2:17. How about make it 2:20?
14 Thank you.

15 (Off the record at 2:07 p.m.)

16 (Back on the record at 2:23 p.m.)

17 CHAIR AHMADI: It is 2:20 now, so I would like to
18 continue with our discussion of the examples. So the next
19 example we have is Charles Starr. And for this individual,
20 my overall rating was favorable.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: My rating was unfavorable.

22 MS. SPANO: And mine was favorable.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so do you want to continue
24 with the same process of going through each one of the
25 essays and discuss each one of them?

1 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I think that is working out
2 well. We are able to understand.

3 MS. SPANO: Okay.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so essay number one was about
5 the interest statement. For me, it was a one paragraph
6 statement which was very concise, but a good statement. It
7 did not impact the minimum qualifications.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I agree with you, Nasir.

9 MS. SPANO: I agree.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. So number two is a response
11 to impartiality, our essay about the individual's ability to
12 be impartial. My take on this one was excellent. The
13 individual, the response to this question touched base on
14 almost every aspect of impartiality as it is stated in the
15 regulation 60800. What about you, Kerri?

16 MS. SPANO: I think he demonstrated very well, I
17 thought he had a very good example about water issues, and
18 how he kept an open mind when he was making decisions, and I
19 thought that this gentleman's response was enhanced with his
20 letter of recommendation also.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: What about you, Mary?

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: When I looked at this
23 individual - sorry.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: Are you okay?

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yeah, I was going to sneeze.

1 Okay, when I looked at this individual, their impartiality,
2 you did not have one sort of example that kind of provided
3 that, but a lot of it, I felt, was their opinion on how they
4 thought they would do things, but not really a clear
5 demonstration.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: But that was my first look at
8 it and not taking into consideration bringing in the letters
9 of recommendation.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: So you mentioned demonstration.
11 Help me understand, if you can, I mean, I know this can be
12 very detailed and we need time to go into the depth of these
13 responses. But help me understand in general terms, when
14 you say demonstration, do you expect individuals to talk
15 about their personal experiences? Or kind of travel? Or -

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What I would like to see in
17 some respects is something where they were able to, in a
18 sense, demonstrate it in a life experience, instead of just
19 saying, you know, "This is my opinion, this is what I
20 think," I wanted them to show me that they did this.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you. Any other
22 thoughts on this, Kerri?

23 MS. SPANO: I am trying to figure out where -
24 Mary, are you talking about right in the middle in his
25 response, "I listen to all points being made?" That area

1 there? "I have learned to not let my feelings cloud," it is
2 not clear enough?

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yeah. I did see some, but it
4 was not as clear as I saw in other applications.

5 MS. SPANO: Okay.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, yeah, to me, like Kerri said
7 just in the middle of the paragraph, I think there were some
8 statements that told me that the individual is involved with
9 several diverse groups, and my interpretation of that,
10 again, was that, you know, had the individual not been
11 impartial, he would not have had any interest in getting
12 involved with various groups.

13 MS. SPANO: Nasir, when you are saying "various
14 groups," involved with various groups, can -

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Do you want me to -

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Well, no, in the sense of
17 where it is showing that he is involved with various groups,
18 are you talking about the different vintner type of groups?
19 Is that what you are saying?

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay, I just wanted to make
22 it clear.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: I can use one example here. For
24 example, the individual says, "As a recent graduate of
25 leadership Farm Bureau, I now add as a mentor for the next

1 group of future leaders. I also serve on the Lodi
2 Woodbridge Winery Commission Research Committee, the
3 American Vintner Foundation Research Grant Review Committee.
4 From these experiences, I have learned not to let my
5 feelings cloud good, rational, objective thoughts." And
6 then it goes on and talk about, "I listen to the points of
7 view from others and try to make decisions based on once I
8 hear everybody else," or all other differing opinions.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay, now I understand what
10 you meant by groups.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, any other thoughts on this
12 one? Kerri? Do you have any other thoughts?

13 MS. SPANO: No, I think his response to - this
14 Applicant actually, overall, I thought his responses got
15 better as I read more and more, and they were strengthened,
16 I think, more with his letters. So I think, Mary, you are
17 saying he is not as specific, he does not have a good
18 example, right, for demonstration. And I think it is fair.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: So it sounds like we can move on to
20 the next one, then. Number three, which is, again, 60805,
21 which is appreciation for diversity, again, my assessment of
22 his response to this question was very good, which means it
23 is to the high end of the middle ground, if I put it in that
24 term. It was not like 100 percent ideal, excellent, but it
25 was very good. It was sufficient to keep him in the pool

1 for that response, alone.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: In the sense of the
3 California diversity, I thought it was a little weak from
4 this response. I thought his volunteer work, I was really
5 glad that he did put that in, yet I did not see really any
6 other mention or development of other type of demographics,
7 involvement also in the sense of geographic understanding,
8 it kind of dealt with just one issue and not others. So
9 that is kind of why I thought it was just not as strong as
10 other ones I have seen, however, this is my first look at
11 this, and comparing him to the other group, and bringing in
12 and really looking at the letters of recommendation, you
13 know, obviously my vote can change.

14 MS. SPANO: I voted yes for this candidate. I
15 also expected from what he said more demonstration, it was
16 not enough, but he demonstrated somewhat. Like for example,
17 when I look at the first paragraph, he says he volunteered -
18 "during a volunteer project at a women's shelter, I was
19 awestruck by the lives of women that I was there to serve."
20 And he describes race, gender, and economics, as just a few
21 differences. "I learned about different viewpoints." It is
22 vague, it is not enough for me, it is not enough
23 appreciation, I guess, from that, I could not gather from
24 that. And another one down below in the last paragraph, he
25 traveled throughout the state looking at water issues, and

1 what he learned - he learned different viewpoints, but he
2 did not really elaborate on which ones, but I think he goes
3 on to explain later on that point in his letters, maybe, and
4 elaborate on that. But just in his essay response here, it
5 was enough to give me a taste to let him still remain, but
6 he could have - I expected more demonstration.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Any other thoughts on this
8 one? Mary, do you have anything else?

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so I agree kind of like in a
11 general statement that this is one of the difficult ones,
12 again, it kind of talks about those issues, but it does not
13 fully demonstrate the kind of - in an example, for example,
14 how this applies to the work that he is going to be doing as
15 a Commissioner.

16 The next essay is about analytical skills and,
17 again, my assessment of this essay was that the response was
18 very good. Again, it was not compared to everybody else
19 that I reviewed that I put in my very excellent pile, this
20 was not there, but it was still very good to remain in the
21 pool.

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I agree with you, Nasir, in
23 the sense of analytical skills, he did definitely meet this.
24 I really liked where he went out and acquired and started
25 using the Geographic Information System in his work, and he

1 explains how he is using it, and how it is useful to him,
2 the information that he could pull in from it. So I thought
3 that was insightful.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. How about you, Kerri?

5 MS. SPANO: I did, too. I thought he did a good
6 job of explaining and providing an example of GIS, and he
7 also has - this candidate throughout is quite knowledgeable
8 about groundwater in the State, and he went throughout the
9 State to understand that, and gather that from the
10 communities; so, a little bit more of this type of issue
11 than -- an understanding than other candidates that I have
12 seen, just because of the nature of his work, I think, that
13 he does.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so it sounds to me that the
15 point that Mary disagreed with Kerri and myself were 805,
16 which is the diversity issue. And, of course, as I
17 mentioned before, that is one of the difficult ones to
18 answer and we will have to go back and now look at the
19 information one more time to see, based on, you know, our
20 understanding of the criteria, which is maybe the most
21 qualified. So shall we move forward with this one? Or do
22 you guys have anything else on the analytical skills?

23 MS. SPANO: This candidate, I thought, possessed
24 great letters of recommendation. I thought it enhanced his
25 standing. And I left him in maybe because, if he is a Board

1 or a candidate with me at the time I am looking at this
2 initially, if he has letters of recommendation and he did,
3 that would enhance and explain in detail more what this
4 candidate can bring as a Commissioner, and his
5 qualifications. I will leave him in for further
6 consideration.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: With the letters of
8 recommendation, I was not quite sure on the letter of
9 recommendation from the Lang Twins Winery and Vineyards if
10 he worked for this individual, or if it was a client. I am
11 thinking it is a client, so I was not quite sure of the
12 relationship on how to interpret this information for this
13 particular recommendation.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: I think he is a friend.

15 MS. SPANO: I thought he was a friend and
16 colleague.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: He is a friend and colleague.

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Oh, friend and colleague,
19 okay.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay, and so I did not quite
22 understand how that related to his job, so...

23 CHAIR AHMADI: You mean the individual? Or the
24 content of the letter of recommendation?

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay, he is a friend and

1 colleague, because he says here it is a role as a technical
2 vineyard consultant for this Lang Twins, and it is from the
3 Lang Twins Winery and Vineyard. So that is just kind of
4 where I, you know, if he is a friend and colleague, does
5 that mean he is - so that is why I was a little unsure of
6 that relationship.

7 MS. SPANO: What I like about this letter is that
8 the individual, the candidate in his responses earlier said
9 that he had mapping skills, GIS skills, and this letter goes
10 into intimate detail about the ability of this candidate to
11 apply his GIS skills, he had created a significant database
12 associated with data for 7,000 acres mapped and established
13 of wine grapes, I mean, this is what he does, he spatially
14 analyzes data, in addition to this tool. These people
15 obviously know his ability to use GIS skills and so I
16 thought that gave me a little more insight on his ability
17 and skills related to that.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: I agree. Yeah, in general, I can
19 just comment on the letter of recommendation on this one,
20 that each letter of recommendation touched on one aspect of
21 those requirements, which was great to see, so it helped me
22 better understand the individual's capacity and abilities.
23 Any other thoughts on this one?

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I wanted to say, on the
25 letter of recommendation from his colleague on the

1 committees, I thought that was very insightful in the sense
2 of understanding his characteristics and how he interacts
3 with people, so I thought that brought another aspect that
4 really was not discussed in the application, but was being
5 able to be demonstrated in this letter of recommendation.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: I agree.

7 MS. SPANO: Which one was that?

8 CHAIR AHMADI: The California Farm Bureau.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Joe Valente.

10 MS. SPANO: Okay.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Any other thoughts, comments on
12 this one?

13 MS. SPANO: This one, I did want to add to this, I
14 forgot, this one I did like because it describes, he also
15 did a tour throughout the State on the infrastructure of the
16 California water supply. This man obviously understands
17 diversity of the needs, different needs of the State with
18 regard to water supply, in terms of the ability to determine
19 what kind of infrastructure is needed. I thought that
20 helped, it is not specific to one location.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Any other comments? So it
22 sounds like we can move forward to our last example. Do you
23 guys agree?

24 MS. SPANO: Yes.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Mary, are we ready?

1 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. So this one is Phoenix Von
3 Hendy. And for this individual, my vote was, again, good,
4 but not most qualified, which means it is in my middle
5 ground. So my overall rating was based on responses to the
6 essay questions and the information on the application,
7 including the letters of recommendation. For essay number
8 one, I found the response to this, to the Interest
9 statement, to be kind of neutral, not directly related to
10 the minimum qualifications.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I agree with you, Nasir, in
12 the sense that it was really not specific. It provided
13 general comments for the impartiality.

14 MS. SPANO: You kind of have the first question,
15 right?

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Oh, first question? I am
17 sorry.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah, number one, the interest
19 statement.

20 MS. SPANO: Mary, did you vote -

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Oh, I voted -

22 MS. SPANO: Unfavorable, right?

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes.

24 MS. SPANO: I voted favorable for this candidate
25 to remain in the pool. I thought his response to why he is

1 interested in serving on the Commission is basically his
2 understanding of the VRA.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: That is a "she," by the way.

4 MS. SPANO: She, sorry.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: No, that is okay. Yeah, so,
6 again, that was one of those middle ground applications that
7 I had a hard time to decide initially because I needed to go
8 back to the application and look at the details, and I
9 initially rated this individual as favorable, leave her in
10 the pool, and I went back to it and eventually, when I look
11 at the collective quality of information on the application,
12 to me, it does not stand as close to what I see as an ideal
13 Commissioner, or my most qualified individuals, so that is
14 why I had to say no.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And I agree with you on that,
16 Nasir, however, you know, since we are going to be looking
17 at this with fresh eyes and comparing them to the other
18 Applicants, my vote can change in looking at the total
19 application.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Correct. So can we move on to
21 essay number two, which is impartiality?

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so do you guys want to start,
24 or do you want me to start on this one, as well.

25 MS. SPANO: Go ahead, Nasir.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so on this one, in response
2 to Applicant's qualification to meet the requirement of
3 60800, impartiality, my assessment suggested that the
4 response was a good demonstration of ability to be
5 impartial. And I can get into the details of that after I
6 hear from you guys to see if there is any detail that we
7 want to discuss on this one.

8 MS. SPANO: I thought he did a fair attempt of
9 providing an example and demonstrating, it probably was not
10 the best I have seen, but I thought he did a good job. He
11 said that his experience from his professional life and he
12 resolved disputes as a tech support person, and he listens
13 to both sides, he sets aside his biases, kind of a general
14 description.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And I agree with Kerri, it
16 was general, there was really not a clear and specific
17 example. I liked where they did bring in a family comment,
18 so that kind of gave something to their personal issues,
19 where not many people did do that, bring the personal. What
20 I normally see is just kind of a reiteration of the
21 regulations, you know, "my family has no bearing on my
22 ability to be impartial," or something along that line,
23 where this person kind of gave a little bit more, but really
24 did not get into specifics.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

1 MS. SPANO: Because she typically is the go-
2 between for disputes between her family members. Did you
3 like that part of it?

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I thought that was
5 insightful, but it still was just a general comment.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: One detail that I want to share
7 with you, just to share with you my thoughts on this one, on
8 impartiality, is about a statement within the interest
9 statement that somewhat relates to the response to this
10 question and, again, this was one of those examples or this
11 is one of those examples that I want to share just my
12 thought process when I was reviewing these. The individual
13 makes a statement under interest statement that I am going
14 to read this once since it is just short. It goes, "The
15 primary goal of the politicians was to create districts that
16 favored their party's candidates, with little regard for
17 anything else." And then it goes on and talks a little bit
18 about politics and the State, and the system, in general.
19 Again, a statement like that, to me, actually sounded - and
20 it still sounds - like stereotyping, which could or could
21 not, or may or may not, relate to impartiality. And, of
22 course, we are going to look back into the detail on this
23 one and see, and I am using this as an example just to share
24 my thoughts with you guys, that when individuals make a
25 statement like that, maybe the intention is not to portray a

1 picture that suggests stereotyping, and the system is what
2 we have and we have to work within the system to make it
3 better, of course. So those are the kind of details that
4 crossed my mind when I was reviewing these responses. But
5 regardless, my rating of the response to impartiality was
6 good, it is not most qualified, but it is good.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And with the comment that you
8 brought up, you know, I looked at that as just, you know,
9 someone with their opinion, could they set that aside and
10 still do district lines? I thought they could. So that is
11 kind of what I think about -

12 CHAIR AHMADI: I agree, I am not saying that is a
13 negative statement, it is just something - it is a fact on
14 the application that I have to consider. It may have an
15 impact on the individuals because, when you put all the
16 statements together, that is when you can draw a good
17 conclusion out of, you know, what is your assessment of the
18 individual's attitude toward the system, or the State, or
19 the work of the Commission. But that is kind of like, of
20 course, difficult, but we have to go through that process.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yeah, and what I was just
22 saying is how I interpreted that, so you would know.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Right, right, no, I understand.

24 MS. SPANO: You know, I want to ask your thoughts
25 on this, it is a little different, this does not apply to

1 this instance, but I want to ask before I forget.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure, this Applicant or -

3 MS. SPANO: No, it is related to responses to why
4 they are interested in serving as a Commissioner. I have
5 seen a lot of responses that say that they feel strongly
6 about being an advocate for the underrepresented, and some
7 of them go to great lengths to qualify that by saying, "I
8 want to take all these other interests involved, not just
9 the ones of a particular favor, and then there are
10 candidates that do not, and they strongly want to be on the
11 Commission so they can be a voice for a certain issue, or be
12 an advocate, and I feel that that is not what the
13 Commissioner's responsibility is, to be an advocate for
14 anybody. They are supposed to be able to hear communities
15 of interest, and be able to listen, and be able to be
16 impartial. And when a person says they want to be an
17 advocate, or they want to hear someone's issue, then I
18 question their ability to be impartial, so I just wanted -

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Was that a question or a comment?

20 MS. SPANO: No, it is a comment that that is what
21 I am seeing, there are advocates and then there are people
22 that have the ability to be impartial, but when they feel so
23 strongly of being somebody's advocate, I am questioning
24 their ability to be impartial.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: I agree, that is a very good point

1 because - I am sorry.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I agree with you, Kerri, in
3 the sense of we are looking at people that can understand
4 all of California and embrace all of California and its
5 diversity, not just say, I am going to only look at this one
6 group and I do not really care about the other groups, you
7 have got to look at all of that, and also understand that
8 there is particular issues that they have to pay attention
9 to in the sense of the Voting Rights Act, but they have to
10 be very mindful and diligent that they meet those
11 requirements. And those, I agree, are the people that you
12 want to include.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah. Thank you. So we were
14 discussing number two. And it sounds like we can move on to
15 number three, which is appreciation for California's diverse
16 demographics and geography. So my assessment of that
17 response was, again, good, which is my middle ground, and
18 the reason I said that, or the reason I assessed it that way
19 is based on, again, demonstration, as well as an
20 understanding of the diversity within the State, both in
21 terms of geography and demographics. So what is your
22 reading on that essay?

23 MS. SPANO: I thought it was strong on this essay
24 because she made the connection to the VRA and, so, I
25 thought he did everything, the demo, the geo, and that.

1 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I thought he - or she, sorry,
2 I thought she was just a little weak in this, however,
3 looking at other items, this might bring it up higher, but I
4 did not really see that there was any encouraging of the
5 diversity, it was more just information.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

7 MS. SPANO: Are you focusing on demographics or
8 geography?

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Both.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. I agree that there is
11 demonstration, especially the individual talks about the
12 travels in the different localities within the State, but it
13 was not fully demonstrated, it was kind of like I wish there
14 was a connection between the two, or a statement that
15 connects the two. One other issue when I was reviewing this
16 response, which relates to a comment that I just made a few
17 minutes ago about the impartiality, again, I came across
18 this other statement that talks about politicians, and it
19 says - I am going to read this once, just for the benefit of
20 you two - "with politicians setting the district boundaries,
21 these needs have frequently been sacrificed on the altar of
22 political and/or monetary expediency." And then it goes on
23 and it talks a little bit more about politics. And, again,
24 my initial take on this was just, you know, it just slowed
25 me down when I came across those statements. And I looked

1 back into that to see if there is any - if these types of
2 statements suggest any biases, for example.

3 MS. SPANO: These are very strong statements, that
4 question - it is a red light bulb.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Not necessarily strong, but just a
6 statement that would cause me to just slow down and just
7 see, is there a message in that response, or in that
8 statement that I should be cautious about.

9 MS. SPANO: Okay.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: And that is what makes this process
11 extremely difficult, because every step on the way, you have
12 to stop and kind of think and make sure that you are not off
13 track. That is the challenge. So, any other thoughts or
14 comments on diversity, Mary and Kerri?

15 MS. SPANO: No.

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: So we can move forward. I know we
18 are all tired, but this is the last one, so - the last
19 example, I mean. So the next one is analytical skills,
20 Regulation 60827. I gave -- my assessment of that response
21 was very good, and because the individual touches bases on
22 different aspects of abilities that are required for the
23 type of challenges and the type of work that the Commission
24 is charged with, so my overall assessment was very good.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I thought she met the

1 requirements in the sense of analytical skills.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, how about you, Kerri?

3 MS. SPANO: I did, I thought she had most of them,
4 and I thought the letters of recommendation helped support
5 this.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you. Shall we move on
7 to the rest of the application on this one?

8 MS. SPANO: Yes, and I just want to make a point.
9 This candidate is a tech support person and does not have a
10 degree or anything, and that was a consideration of mine, I
11 just thought, you know, they had good responses and I left
12 them in at the time, and so - did any of you consider -

13 CHAIR AHMADI: Let me ask you this question,
14 curious, would your assessment have changed had you known
15 that the responses to the minimum qualifications were
16 superb? You talked something about the degrees or the lack
17 there.

18 MS. SPANO: Well, I did choose to leave him in,
19 regardless.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

21 MS. SPANO: Yeah. So I am curious because you
22 both voted this candidate unfavorably. Was that a
23 consideration of yours at all? The lack of -

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No, no.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you. Any other

1 thoughts on the minimum qualifications on this one?

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: One thing I did want to say
3 in the sense of the letters of recommendation was that, with
4 some of these, the information that was provided with one of
5 them, it is their co-volunteer individual from Amnesty
6 International and World Affairs Council, that one, you know,
7 it was great that they sent it in, but it was very general
8 in comments and did not really kind of add to the
9 Applicant's response.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: I totally agree. To me, it sounded
11 like out of place.

12 MS. SPANO: Which one was this one?

13 CHAIR AHMADI: Not related to the diversity or any
14 of the minimum qualifications. I wish there was some detail
15 so that we can relate it to...

16 MS. SPANO: Yeah, I do not think it was enough to
17 apply it to Commission work, in his qualifications. I think
18 what this Applicant did offer is - and in his letters of
19 recommendation - was the ability to possibly be good at
20 consensus and resolving - he is good at conflict resolution,
21 obviously, throughout his application. The letters state
22 that and his application does, so I was thinking, well, if
23 he was a Commissioner, I do not know if he would ever make
24 it, but if he was, this person probably can really
25 understand, I mean, just handle a room full of contentious -

1 a contentious crowd that is describing one issue and another
2 and be able to handle that. So I thought that would be a
3 quality that would apply to a Commissioner.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you so much. Any other
5 thoughts, comments on this one, in particular, any other
6 topics on the whole - I know, Mary, you want to discuss some
7 issues at the end of going through these examples. Maybe
8 this is a good time to do that?

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: That would be great, thank
10 you.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I know that we are going to
13 be looking at these Applicants a little bit more in detail,
14 and I just kind of wanted to get your view on some of the
15 aspects that came up while I was looking at them, and so at
16 least we could become - or be a little bit more in consensus
17 with our review of them.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure.

19 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: In the sense of the letters
20 of recommendation, I kind of alluded to having letters of
21 recommendation come from politicians, former politicians, or
22 individuals that are closely involved in politics. Do you
23 feel that these Applicants could be impartial because of
24 this close relationship?

25 CHAIR AHMADI: That is a very good question and a

1 difficult one to answer, perhaps, because you will have to -
2 the way I will look at that will be to look at the whole
3 application, and then put that within the context of the
4 type of activities that the individual is involved with. If
5 the individual has - if the information related to the
6 individual's background, or past experiences and employment,
7 and education, suggests that the individual is heavily
8 involved with politics, for example, and for example if they
9 have any internship, probably perhaps I would look at why
10 they chose to have a Senator, for example, give them a
11 letter of recommendation vs. somebody who is not involved
12 with the current politics. So I will try to get some more
13 insight into is there any other information within the
14 application, within the package, that suggests that there
15 may be an issue about impartiality. And, honestly, if I see
16 that, to me, that means the individual may have difficulty
17 to be impartial.

18 MS. SPANO: I actually have a candidate who I
19 retained to move forward, who was an ex pro tem Mayor, ex
20 Councilman, and all letters of recommendation were from ex
21 local officials, and I kept her in because I thought she met
22 the qualifications and provided a very strong response, and
23 so I did not - I was not persuaded or convinced that she had
24 an agenda or that she would not have the ability to be
25 impartial. If I sensed that any letters of recommendations

1 from political officials or local officials could be a
2 voice, or somebody that they are too close to, that could
3 affect their ability to be impartial, then I may be inclined
4 to remove them from the pool. It depends on their essay
5 responses and if there is any hint that they may not be
6 impartial, they are too political, then I may be inclined to
7 remove them because there are other strong candidates in the
8 pool right now that probably should remain in the pool.
9 Maybe when I look at them again, I will have to give it some
10 consideration, but there is still a fair amount of people
11 that can be considered.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Does that answer your question,
13 Mary? Or do you have any thoughts on that?

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yeah, I just kind of wanted
15 to kind of go over my thoughts so you would know where I am
16 coming from because we do not get to talk about any of this
17 unless we are in open meetings, so I kind of needed to know
18 how they are going to be interpreting it so that we can at
19 least come to some sort of consensus. You know, I have seen
20 some current politicians providing letters of
21 recommendations, I have seen prior politicians, I have seen
22 politicians from out of state give letters of
23 recommendation, individuals that are closely involved in
24 politics, and I am kind of along the line that Nasir is
25 saying, it really depends on the relationship, it really

1 depends on, you know, why this individual had this person
2 provide this letter of recommendation, what type of
3 political affiliation it is, and I think that should all be
4 taken into consideration because, when I looked at the
5 applications, initially, if the person did receive a letter
6 of recommendation from a politician, I did not exclude them,
7 I said, "Okay, I see this, I am aware of it, that is
8 something that I might have to look at a little bit later
9 and really kind of go in depth, and what does this mean?

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

11 MS. SPANO: I understand what you are saying. If
12 it is from a politician, ex-Mayor, whatever, if they can
13 provide details about the candidates other than they served
14 their position well, if they can give me a little bit more
15 to help, as with any other letters of recommendation, and it
16 does not persuade me that it is political only, then
17 consider it.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Any other thoughts or ideas
19 that you want to share maybe, or any other questions?

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Oh, I have lots. When I was
21 looking at the letters of recommendation, what I found, and
22 I kind of alluded to this, is when we were going through
23 these six Applicants, is I thought it more - it enhanced the
24 Applicant's qualities when I saw their letters of
25 recommendations coming from more than one source, so more

1 than just receiving it from your church or from your current
2 employer, you know, where you received it from maybe a co-
3 worker, a supervisor, a volunteer organization, not just one
4 volunteer organization, you know, if you belong to three or
5 four, having one from each volunteer organization, I kind of
6 looked at that and I thought, hey, that's pretty good, they
7 are getting a rounded type of information to me instead of
8 just narrow. So family members, I thought, you know, that
9 is great, but if only family members provided information, I
10 kind of went, "Wait a minute." If only subordinate
11 individuals provide information, I kind of looked at those
12 and I am thinking, "Wait," for those. So I kind of weighed
13 those. And also, I have seen even letters of recommendation
14 that I do not know if even the recommender knew that they
15 were being provided because some of the dates on them were
16 from 1988, letters or recommendation, and some from 1992, so
17 I thought that very interesting. So I am definitely going
18 to weigh that when I look at these individuals.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Definitely.

20 MS. SPANO: Is this the same how you feel about
21 public comments, because that is how I felt. I have seen
22 one Applicant that had a very long list of public comments
23 and, as I went to look at all of them, there are people in a
24 congregation, and her hairdresser, dentist, you know, people
25 that I do not think would understand her qualifications that

1 speak to the Commission. Maybe they speak to her character,
2 she is a nice lady, she commits to her share of church work,
3 but it did not quite speak to Commission work, and I thought
4 that was irrelevant, and I think I am going to treat any
5 letter - I like how you said it - it does, I agree, variety
6 of sources, if anybody can give me more detail about that
7 Applicant in terms of the relevancy to the Commission work,
8 then I feel that it may boost the candidate's standing to
9 remain in the pool.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Any other thoughts, Mary?

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yeah. What I also did see is
12 some letters of recommendation with form letters, where it
13 looked like the same information was in all three letters of
14 recommendation. When I looked at those, I definitely said,
15 "You know, this is something that it looks like the
16 Applicant provided to the recommender to just send in."
17 There was some variation, but you could tell it was pretty
18 much the same information. I did not provide a - it is not
19 that I did not provide a favorable response, but when I am
20 going to look at these letters of recommendation, I am going
21 to keep this in mind, so if I see these form letters and
22 stuff and they are not adding anything additional to it, I
23 am going to look at this Applicant and say, "Could this
24 person really do the job? Or is it they are more of a
25 controlling individual?"

1 MS. SPANO: And I saw some of those and I did
2 question it. I thought they did provide form letters and
3 usually those form letters are very general. They will cite
4 all the Regs, they will say, "He has the ability to be
5 impartial," have a general statement about that, the
6 diversity and analytical, and they do not really give you a
7 lot of detail about maybe a program, a community project, or
8 anything that the Applicant may have provided in the
9 response. So I understand, yeah.

10 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And also, kind of what I was
11 alluding to, if you can tell me how the letter of
12 recommendation, how you relate to that individual, I am able
13 to look at those examples and determine how to interpret
14 that information because I have seen some friends say that,
15 "Oh, yes, this person is very analytical, and they have done
16 this, this and this," well, I am not going to weigh that
17 much on that letter of recommendation because this is a
18 friend and how do they really know their analytical skills
19 in that respect? It just sounds more like what they heard.
20 I would weigh more on prior employers, or maybe where you
21 were in a committee and you were friends, and you provided
22 that information, where you were able to see that individual
23 perform this work.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I also just want to let you

1 know, in the sense of the public comments, I am looking at
2 it the same way as I am for the letters of recommendation.
3 So is that what you are doing?

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes.

5 MS. SPANO: Yes.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: With contributions, I am
7 looking at the contributions and I am trying to determine
8 how much political contributions are there, is that all I am
9 seeing, where it is to, you know, either the Democratic
10 Party, the Republican Party, the Green Party, and it is for
11 certain causes and for certain issues that only benefit that
12 party, you know, I kind of look at the impartiality with
13 that when I look at the contributions. Is that what you
14 guys are doing?

15 MS. SPANO: I do. I look at the organizations, to
16 what extent their contributions are, you know, if it is Red
17 Cross, stuff like that, I think it is pretty neutral, to me.
18 It does not show any bias or partiality issues. What I am
19 concerned about are, I had one Applicant that I believe I
20 moved forward, that gave significant contributions, more
21 than I would have normally seen in another application, that
22 was pretty significant, they were two religious
23 organizations. Now, their application responses itself did
24 not allude to any religious undertone, or any type of unique
25 issue that they had to bring forward, or that they were an

1 advocate for, but it kind of struck me because I have never
2 seen anything so significant. So I did not know if you
3 noticed that or if you would consider that.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: I probably have. I do remember the
5 details, but I do agree with you that there were some
6 significant, which means that - I can use just one example -
7 - \$247,000 in one year to an organization. To me, again, if
8 I can sum it up, you know, I am so glad that we are talking
9 about the details of these issues because that helps me
10 develop my vision, as well. Everything in the application
11 package should be looked at, that is why we have this
12 information as a package. I think we have to be very
13 careful how we look at, or how we interpret that
14 information. I think the safest way to do that would be to
15 put it within the context of these minimum qualifications.
16 Is there anything in any part of that application package
17 that can help us reach a conclusion towards either a
18 favorable or unfavorable vote for the individual? I think
19 that would be the safest approach. Again, to me, letters of
20 recommendation in general terms is not as strong as the
21 direct response from the Applicant on the application, but
22 nevertheless, it has potential for being of significant
23 value when I make my assessment on the collective quality of
24 information that is there, to help me understand where the
25 individual stands.

1 MS. SPANO: I agree because it is the Applicant's
2 responsibility to fulfill that application, complete that
3 application, the best that he can, nobody else can do that
4 for him.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: And just to give you an example,
6 and we talked about having letters of recommendation from
7 politicians, I have - I am going to show you two examples,
8 not by names because I do not remember, I have it in my
9 notes, I had a situation where the individual had a letter
10 of recommendation from a Senator within the State, and the
11 individual had - the information suggested that there was
12 heavy involvement with the politics, with this Senator's
13 office, and for that reason, my interpretation of that
14 information is that there may be a question about the
15 impartiality. I did not say no, but obviously that is not
16 my most qualified because there is some question about that
17 involvement. On the other hand, I had a letter of
18 recommendation from Mr. Bagley, who is one of the co-authors
19 of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act in the State, and you
20 know, and that individual, the responses in the application
21 were sufficient for me to say, yes, this is an excellent
22 ideal response, and therefore I have no problem keeping him
23 or retaining him in the pool, regardless of who wrote the
24 letter of recommendation. So, to me, in general terms,
25 letters of recommendation are there to serve two purposes,

1 one, to get some more insight and from individuals who know
2 the Applicant, to get to know what other people think about
3 them, and 2) how that information that is contained within
4 these letters of recommendation relate to the minimum
5 qualifications that we are seeking for each Applicant. So I
6 will try to use that with that objective.

7 MS. SPANO: I think we are at a point where it is
8 beyond the minimum qualifications. I think that these
9 people obviously have met the minimum qualifications, this
10 622, I guess, and I think I am more looking at it from the
11 perspective of what additional quality can they bring to the
12 Commission work? What makes them stand out to be
13 competitive as a Commissioner? And so I am not adding any
14 criteria to the Regs, it is all about the Regs, but when you
15 have 600 Applicants to compare, one to the other, you have
16 to see what ability, or what unique skill, or what knowledge
17 can they bring to the Commission. And based on their
18 application, so -

19 CHAIR AHMADI: If I can make one clarification.
20 If I heard you say, you said we are beyond looking at the
21 minimum qualifications -

22 MS. SPANO: Only because you mentioned the minimum
23 qualifications, and so that is why I brought it up.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: Well, let's talk about it because
25 we want to make sure that you are all on the same page on

1 that. To me, this is just another round of the same game
2 starting all over again. To me, it is like looking back at
3 the 622 applications with fresh eyes, and going back to the
4 qualities of their responses, and the information that is in
5 the package, and make a judgment on that adequacy of that
6 information related to those minimum qualifications, and not
7 only looking at the diversity of those minimum
8 qualifications, and not only looking at the diversity,
9 definitely from now on we will be more focused on who these
10 individuals are, and especially when we were talking about
11 how the letters of recommendations may have an impact on
12 your assessment of individuals' impartiality, that is a
13 minimum qualification.

14 MS. SPANO: No, it is a minimum qualification, but
15 I -

16 CHAIR AHMADI: I mean to say that we are not
17 looking at minimum qualifications, but maybe I heard it
18 wrong.

19 MS. SPANO: I was just saying that we are looking
20 beyond that. I think that the 622 that we hold right now,
21 we have determined that they have met the minimum
22 qualifications, right? Because I think, if they did not,
23 they would not be in there.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: At least one of us did.

25 MS. SPANO: Yes, at least one of us thought like

1 that, and so for those of us who did not see that Applicant,
2 or maybe we voted a no on it -

3 CHAIR AHMADI: We are going to go back and look at
4 it.

5 MS. SPANO: We are going to go back and look at it
6 and look at why did we say no, did they not? Did we
7 determine that it did not meet the minimum qualifications?
8 But I think we also, I am, at least, was planning to look at
9 those Applicants that maybe I disagreed with you, or Mary,
10 and see how competitive are they? How do they fit in this
11 whole scheme? Because we are looking beyond - we are
12 looking at their minimum qualifications as well, but how are
13 they going to be competitive, knowing that we have to reduce
14 this pool very quickly. And we have to look at these
15 applications, these 622, very carefully - everything that
16 they have provided.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure. I just wanted to clarify
18 that to make sure.

19 MS. SPANO: Yeah, I know, you are right.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: I know you know, but just - so any
21 other thoughts you have, Mary? You said you have a long
22 list.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Oh, yeah. In the sense of
24 work history, I am going to start really kind of taking a
25 look at the work history and individuals where I am seeing

1 them not having a steady job - not a steady job - where I am
2 not seeing -

3 CHAIR AHMADI: If the information suggests that
4 they are not able to maintain a job for a long time?

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Or do not stay in a position
6 for very long, like six months here, a year here, two years
7 here, I am going to kind of look at that Applicant a little
8 bit different, unless, you know, I have seen some, like I
9 was saying with one of the individuals that I included, only
10 was out of college for a couple of years, so obviously you
11 are going to see college students having numerous types of
12 jobs. Also, one of the Applicants that we did talk about,
13 she had a letter of recommendation where it kind of
14 explained why she moved from one position to the other, and
15 I thought that was great, so that is kind of what I am going
16 to be looking at in the sense of work history. Is this
17 person able to work in a group? That is what is going to
18 kind of help me determine, you know, if they are not able to
19 stay at a job, my feeling is, okay, now why? That is what I
20 am going to think about.

21 MS. JANO: Is that in relation to their ability to
22 serve as a Commissioner for those lengths of time and be
23 committed? Are you questioning their ability to be
24 committed to doing that?

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Both. Both in the sense of

1 would they be able to have this 10-year commitment, and then
2 also, is the reason why they are changing jobs so often
3 maybe because they are unable to work in groups? And,
4 obviously, being a Commissioner, you are going to have to
5 work in a group.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

7 MS. SPANO: Have you ever - when you look at the
8 responses and you look at the experience that the Applicants
9 describe, when you find that it is beyond 10 years, say, it
10 is very dated experience, it is from the '70s or the '80s,
11 but it is relevant, maybe it has to do with redistricting,
12 or Voting Rights Act, and litigation, or something to that
13 effect, do you consider that as applicable and relevant to
14 the response, since it kind of dated? Or are you more
15 inclined to look at more current information that the
16 Applicant can bring?

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I look at all the
18 information. Where they are giving me information that goes
19 back to the '70s or the '60s, I think that is great because
20 normally what I am seeing is people that are writing
21 information in their essays, they are telling me a little
22 bit about what they did in the past. Well, I was hoping to
23 be able to see that maybe in their work history and say,
24 "Oh, okay, this is the time period that you did this." So
25 it kind of gave me a little bit of understanding of the time

1 frame that they did this, that they had - it even listed it
2 in their work history, so I kind of thought it gave it a
3 little bit more relevance, to me.

4 MS. SPANO: Okay. I moved forward a candidate
5 that had quite a history of experience that dates back
6 probably several years after I was born, and so I thought it
7 was very strong experience and very relevant, and I was
8 wondering how you would treat - consider dated experience
9 like that, okay.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: My answer is yes, as well, because
11 I am looking at it based on is the individual currently -
12 appears to be able to do that type of work that the
13 Commission is charged to do, based on that experience, so I
14 do not have any time limit in terms of when they acquired
15 that experience.

16 MS. SPANO: Okay.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: But it helps me better understand
18 where they stand.

19 MS. SPANO: Sure, okay.

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: That is kind of the questions
21 that I had in the sense of how it relates to the particular
22 areas of the application. I have some other questions that
23 I wanted to discuss with you guys about any like
24 characteristics that I saw within the Applicants and I
25 wanted to know how you were thinking about them.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, sure.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Individuals hat had prior
3 redistricting experience, if they had prior redistricting
4 experience in the '60s, '70s, '80s, '90s, 2000, did you look
5 at all of them the same since they had the prior
6 redistricting experience? Or did you say that somebody that
7 had redistricting experience in 2000 was more relevant than
8 somebody that had it in 1970? Or did you think that, hey,
9 they had redistricting experience?

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Let me try to answer that question.
11 I will kind of share my thoughts on that. It is another
12 difficult question to answer because to some degree it is
13 subjective. It depends on for which once of these minimum
14 qualifications you are trying to use that information to
15 help you make an assessment. To me, any experience that an
16 individual has with the redistricting process, being local
17 or State level, or even national, there is certain value in
18 that because it is never like being exposed to the kind of
19 challenges that redistricting puts on individuals to do
20 their job. Now, if I am looking at that information for the
21 purpose of assessing whether or not the individual can be
22 impartial, I would not only look at the timing of that
23 experience, but also at what level that experience was
24 acquired. Just to share one example, if I have an
25 individual who was heavily involved with the State's

1 redistricting back in 2000, for example, to me, that
2 experience has a different weight as compared with another
3 individual who has had, for example, experience at the
4 County level or City level, with some kind of redistricting
5 that is more recent. To me, the more recent experience will
6 have more weight in terms of, you know, impartiality than
7 this one which suggests having involvement with the previous
8 redistricting of the State. So we have to - I mean, I will
9 try to make my decision based on how that experience impacts
10 the individual's ability to meet these minimum
11 qualifications. In other words, I will make sure that I
12 consider whether or not there was any impact on impartiality
13 because of that experience. But in terms of analytical
14 skills, definitely, any experience will help.

15 MS. SPANO: Any - okay, that is interesting. I
16 have probably eliminated some candidates that actually cited
17 maybe they had redistricting experience because they failed
18 to explain it. If they just said, "I have prior
19 redistricting experience," I did not give them a free pass
20 to stay in. I felt like they had an obligation to
21 demonstrate, describe to us the extent of redistricting that
22 they had because I do not know. And I would like to know
23 how relevant it would be to this. I treated it like
24 somebody said, "I'm an attorney, so I'm always impartial,
25 I'm required to," without explaining any - "I'm a Judge, I'm

1 impartial." "I'm a CPA, I take," you know, "...ethics
2 courses. I'm impartial." That did not really provide me
3 with enough information to evaluate their qualifications for
4 impartiality, so if they said they had redistricting, they
5 failed to explain, for whatever reason, what response that
6 they were trying to provide in the application, if it was
7 not sufficient and I did not have enough information, then I
8 could not evaluate it compared to somebody else who provided
9 me an adequate response for a certain qualification.

10 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Just to kind of clarify it a
11 little bit more, these individuals have met the minimum
12 qualifications, that they have provided the detail and they
13 demonstrated that they understand California's diversity and
14 everything, but yet they also provided that they have had
15 prior redistricting experience and provided you a little bit
16 of information, are you going to look at them differently
17 than individuals that do not have it?

18 MS. SPANO: Am I looking at it differently that do
19 not have it? No.

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: In the sense of - you look at
21 their response, but if this individual has a good response,
22 but then they also have California redistricting experience,
23 would you kind of look at them with, hey, they have prior
24 experience?

25 MS. SPANO: They probably had more weight because

1 it is directly relevant to Commission work. But if they
2 failed to explain the extent and a lot of them did explain
3 because they were completely involved in redistricting at
4 maybe a District or a County level, and I would include
5 those. But sometimes if they did not explain, and I look at
6 the totality of the response, if they failed to demonstrate
7 or provide sufficient responses in all areas of their
8 application, then I am inclined to probably move them out of
9 the pool. If they are strong in other areas, maybe, and
10 they say, "Okay, I've got redistricting," of course I am
11 going to give them credit for that, I am not going to ignore
12 it.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: If I could comment, please, just my
14 thought. Just hold on to your thought, Mary. I think we
15 are all saying the same thing. I think if we can just sum
16 it up in one statement it would be, you are not only looking
17 at understanding of these requirements, but also
18 demonstration of how they are going to use that experience
19 or knowledge or ability to be successful in the Commission.
20 So it goes back to, if they just mention, or they just use a
21 statement that, "Hey, I have done redistricting before, and
22 therefore I should be able to do it," the redistricting that
23 we are talking about now is unprecedented, it is for the
24 first time in California. Any experience that individuals
25 have in this area will be certainly helpful, to me, at

1 least. But, again, we should look at how they demonstrate
2 that they are having, or how that experience helped them
3 develop those skills and abilities that are required of any
4 Commissioner for this task.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And these characteristics
6 that I am bringing up are, you know, when this person - when
7 you are looking at everything and we are looking at the 622
8 people, and we are getting down and we need to narrow the
9 pool down, you are seeing that their information is adequate
10 in the sense of the minimum qualifications, however you have
11 this person that has some prior redistricting experience and
12 comparing them equally to this person that has the same
13 response, but they have no prior redistricting experience,
14 are you going to look at this person a little bit
15 differently that has prior redistricting experience? That
16 is what I am trying to get is, when we are narrowing down
17 this pool, are we going to look at some of these specific
18 qualifications in these people that have - are we going to
19 give them a little bit more weight? Because obviously you
20 are going to want to have people that have a background of
21 successfully dealing with the public, you know, that to me,
22 if they are able to demonstrate that they are able to go out
23 to the community, solicit information, gather that
24 information, analyze it, and they have done that and
25 demonstrated that successfully, I am going to give that

1 person a little bit more weight than somebody that has not,
2 and so that is kind of why I was kind of going through these
3 particular characteristics.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: As I mentioned, you know, there is
5 value in having experience in terms of developing skills to
6 be able to do the work of the Commission. But I do not want
7 to say yes or no to your question, Mary, because it has to
8 be subjective because it depends on why you are using that
9 particular piece of information in your assessment. If you
10 are looking at impartiality, I would probably look beyond
11 just what is required for analytical skills, but if I am
12 using that information to assess in terms of their
13 abilities, then definitely it is easier to answer to say
14 yes. I hope I am helpful, but to me it is a case-by-case -
15 I think it should be a case-by-case decision-making process
16 in terms of how that information - how much par that
17 information has in the overall quality of the individual's
18 ability to meet these requirements.

19 MS. SPANO: Yeah, and it should be clear. I think
20 it should be clearly stated in the application, in their
21 responses. I do not think we should have to read into it
22 and make assumptions that, yeah, because he does this, I
23 think he meets the minimum qualifications or any
24 qualifications. I think they have to make a diligent effort
25 to demonstrate and describe why they feel they are qualified

1 because they -

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: We are kind of getting off
3 track here. What I am saying is, these people already have
4 these qualifications, you are looking at them together, and
5 you have these people that have -

6 CHAIR AHMADI: By "these people," I am sorry,
7 Mary, are you saying in the sense of the 622?

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes, sorry. You know, I
9 think -

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Can I just - what I am
11 hearing, you can just let me know, maybe I can help you
12 along, I think what Mary is saying side-by-side, two
13 Applicants, all other things being equal, does the person
14 who has redistricted have an advantage over the person who
15 has not? I think that is what I understand your question to
16 be.

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Exactly.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah, my response is yes.

19 MS. SPANO: Yeah.

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

21 MS. SPANO: Well, guess we did not understand the
22 question.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Sorry, I guess I was not
24 clear, so sorry.

25 MS. SPANO: It is 3:30, that is why.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, Counsel. Do you have
2 any other questions, Mary?

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You know what? No, I am
4 going to hold off because I think we are going to have -
5 obviously we have 622 Applicants and we are going to have to
6 narrow these down, so we are going to have another meeting
7 and I am thinking probably that the meeting will be some
8 time at the end of June, beginning of July that we will be
9 looking at this.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Actually, we are going to talk
11 about that in a few minutes, about what to expect from this
12 point on. But just to - if you do not have any other
13 comments or question, Mary, or Kerri -

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Well, I have a couple. I
15 just kind of - what you are going to notice is, in our - at
16 least in how I selected it, I notice that there was a lot of
17 Democrats that I gave favorable responses to. One thing
18 that I did note was that individuals that were Democrats
19 were more activists, demonstrated their volunteer work. I
20 showed that they had special initiatives to these
21 Applicants, and that is what I just noticed. I do not know
22 why, it could be just because of them, but I just wanted to
23 let people know that this is what I saw, I saw quite a few
24 of that. It just means, though, we are going to have a
25 larger pool of Democrats that we are going to have to narrow

1 down to those 40, so just be aware.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Well, the chances that we will
3 eliminate more Democrats are higher than Republicans for
4 that reason, so -

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes. Thank you.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: But the end result will be 20 from
7 each group, as defined in the law. So good point, Mary.
8 Any other thoughts?

9 MS. SPANO: It was mentioned earlier from the
10 public about web links and other information cited in the
11 application because a lot of Applicants for their activities
12 have written articles, journals, professional journals, and
13 such. Initially I did not even look at those because I
14 frankly did not have time, but are you guys going to look at
15 that? Are you going to consider that? I mean, sometimes my
16 concern is that, if they have provided that information, I
17 look at it and it shows that they may have a strong
18 viewpoint about something, they may not have the ability to
19 be impartial. I may want to know that.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah, I am sorry for stopping you.
21 If I understand the question correctly, are we going to be
22 looking at any references that the Applicants make in
23 response to their questions, and my answer is yes,
24 definitely. We will look at everything and anything that is
25 available to help us make those decisions to the extent

1 possible.

2 MS. SPANO: Okay.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Was that your answer, too, Mary?

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And I agree with Nasir. If
5 they are providing that information and if it might add to
6 the Applicant, I agree, we can look at it. I am not sure,
7 if it does not add, or I am looking at this person and I see
8 that they have a wonderful impartiality, or whatever,
9 response, it is clear, it is concise, and it does not really
10 need any additional enhancement, I might not spend the time
11 to go and look at that document. Where I might spend, if it
12 needs a little bit more, I might look at another person's.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: So it sounds like, if we need to,
14 we will go case-by-case and look at that because, again, to
15 me, if I sum it up, unless you guys have any other questions
16 or comments about these examples that we just reviewed or
17 discussed - do you have any other questions?

18 MS. SPANO: No.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Do you, Mary?

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. So obviously you can see
22 that the decision-making process on these applications is
23 not easy, especially for the ones who are not clear cut. I
24 am glad that we have had and appreciated to discuss these
25 examples, and I thank the Counsel for providing that

1 opportunity, for identifying some examples for us to look
2 at. If I sum it up and just summarize what we discussed,
3 for one, as I mentioned, it is not easy sometimes, it is
4 difficult, it is challenging. And, number two, at this
5 point, we will go back to all of these applications and look
6 at each one of them with fresh eyes, as if we have not
7 reviewed them before. The process that we have set up so
8 far has been focused on efficiency, at the same time, our
9 compliance with the Voters First Act, to be able to set up a
10 system that enables us to look at every single Applicant in
11 the pool, and to look at the application material in the
12 pool. Now that we have a smaller pool, at least looking at
13 the positive side, the advantage for us is that we would be
14 able to spend a little bit more time on each of these
15 applications. But, again, that does not mean that we have
16 sufficient time and we still have to be efficient. So,
17 looking back at these applications, again, we will apply the
18 requirements that are stated in the law, which is
19 specifically impartiality, appreciation for California's
20 diverse demographics and geography, and analytical skills.
21 And we will be looking at all Applicant material, including
22 letters of recommendation and public comments, and where
23 Applicants made reference to articles or other academic
24 literature, for example, we will be looking at that
25 information, as well, to the extent that we need to look at

1 those on a case-by-case basis, but it is a balance that we
2 have to keep between efficiency and being effective in our
3 review to reach the accurate decisions, basically, down the
4 road. But we will meet again, of course. Do you have a
5 comment, Mary?

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I just - there was one thing
7 that I did miss out. In the sense of efficiency, what I
8 plan to do with this 622 Applicant pool, I plan on
9 separating the Applicants out by political affiliation, so
10 what I am going to do is take a look at the Democrats and
11 compare them to the other Democrats. I am going to take a
12 look at the Republicans and compare them to the other
13 Republicans, and same with the others, so now I am going to
14 kind of get into the political affiliations where prior I
15 really was not looking at those political affiliations since
16 I had over 4,500 applicants.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, Mary. Yeah, you are
18 getting ahead of me because I had it on my list, but, no,
19 that is good, so now we do not have to talk about it - no,
20 just kidding.

21 **ITEM 7. Discussion relating to panelists' initial**
22 **assessments about applicants, further assessment and**
23 **review of all remaining applicants, requests for additional**
24 **information from remaining applicants, and remaining**
25 **applicant selection phases**

1 CHAIR AHMADI: So it sounds like we are ready to
2 move on to the next item on my list, which is Agenda Item 7.
3 And this is in regard to the Form 700s. For those
4 Applicants who are currently retained in the pool, each one
5 of them will receive a Form 700. Those Forms 700 are going
6 to be due back to receive to the Bureau by July 12th, 2010.
7 So there is a 30-day requirement in the law for those Form
8 700s to reach back to us. Again, I want to make sure that I
9 say this, they are not due back postmarked July 12th, they
10 are due back to the Bureau of State Audits by July 12th,
11 2010. Initially, we are not anticipating to have this many
12 Form 700s and obviously we are not going to end up having
13 more than 120 or in that neighborhood for our interviews, so
14 the reason why we are requesting this many Form 700s is to
15 make our process more efficient. We, the Panel members,
16 will not have access to the Form 700s, even the ones that we
17 do receive within this time, during this time, until after
18 our next meeting, during which in the next meeting we are
19 hoping to narrow the pool further down into an even smaller
20 group. And then, after that meeting, which will probably
21 take place - of course, these dates are just based on how we
22 see the process may proceed from this point on, the meeting
23 will be around June 30th. So in about two weeks' time, we
24 are going to come back and meet and share with each other,
25 and also with the public, our assessment, a reevaluation of

1 these 622 Applicants. And based on what we anticipate at
2 this point, that meeting is going to be a long one, it may
3 take several days for that meeting, but we are hoping that
4 we complete that meeting by July 2nd. So the Form 700 that
5 the Bureau receives in between that timeframe, from now on
6 until July 2nd, will not be shared with the Panel members.
7 Those Applicants who will be eliminated are excluded from
8 the pool based on the decisions that we will make in that
9 meeting; the Form 700 for those Applicants will be turned
10 back to them, they will not even be placed on the website.
11 But Applicants who will be voted on as favorable in that
12 meeting, those Form 700s that we receive for those
13 Applicants will be placed on the website and they will
14 become public record. And the Applicant Review Panel will
15 then have access to those Form 700s and it becomes part of
16 the application package at that point, and we will be
17 looking at those at the same time. And once they are
18 public, they will be public for 12 years, so they will be on
19 the website.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Well, they will not be on
21 the website if you are eliminated after July 2nd. They are
22 not going to be on the website for 12 years. They are
23 public record, once the Panel receives them, they become
24 Applicant materials, they are public records. If you are
25 eliminated from the pool thereafter, your Form 700, just

1 like all other Applicant materials relating to you, come off
2 the website, however, they still are public record, so if
3 someone writes the Bureau and says, "I would like to receive
4 photocopies of Applicant John Smith's materials," we may
5 have to provide those, although we certainly will redact as
6 much as we can to protect your privacy. But just so that
7 everyone is clear, if you turn in your Form 700 now, the
8 Bureau will hold it, it will not be a public record. If you
9 are eliminated from the pool on or before, or during the
10 next meeting, that will be returned back to you, unopened.
11 We will not retain it therefore it is not a public record.
12 So we are hoping that when we have further eliminations for
13 the next meeting, what we really end up doing is retaining
14 the Form 700, the completed Form 700s, from a much smaller
15 group of people. It is just that, because you have 30 days
16 to fill it out, we need to ask you to get us to us now.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, Stephanie. So the next
18 topic that I wanted to talk about was, as Mary alluded a few
19 minutes ago, we will be breaking our pools down into smaller
20 pools of Democrats, Republicans, and other group as required
21 in the law, and our reviews from now on will consider our
22 goal, which is to eventually come with 20 most qualified for
23 each of these groups, so that is something that we will
24 consider from now on. Another issue that we will focus more
25 on from this point on is the issue of diversity, not only

1 political diversity, but also those distinct diversity
2 criteria that we have in the law, which is geography,
3 gender, race, ethnicity, and economic status. And that is
4 how these reports that the Counsel shared with us are broken
5 down into.

6 The interviews will take place, we are still
7 planning to be able to conduct interviews in the month of
8 August, and hopefully we will get it done, depending on how
9 many interviews we have to schedule, and how many applicants
10 we have in our about 120 applicants. We will probably get
11 done with interviews the first week of September, or maybe
12 mid-September, which will then leave us with about two weeks
13 to make the final decision to identify 60 of the most
14 qualified applicants, which is due by October 1st of 2010.
15 So we will be busy throughout summer. From this point on,
16 as I mentioned before, our review will be more focused on
17 the detail and information on these applications, and it is
18 not - the chances that we request additional information or
19 clarification of the information on the applications from
20 the Applicants is very high. And as we request that
21 information, I just wanted to make sure that the public
22 understands that, for the panel members to have that
23 information, it is a critical part of their decision-making
24 process. So please respond to the Bureau's request and get
25 that information to us as soon as you can because, if we

1 request information and we do not receive a response in
2 time, that could suggest removal from the pool.

3 Do you guys have any other comments, any other
4 items that you want to talk about so far, or any other
5 questions?

6 MS. SPANO: No.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I kind of wanted to give a
8 comment, to let everyone know, my silo staff and I am sure
9 the other ARP members, silo staff, they work so hard and I
10 wanted to personally thank them. My staff put in so many
11 hours to help me be able to make this deadline and to say
12 thank you, I wanted to also let everyone know that this was
13 a random drawing for us to get on this Panel, and I know
14 that we have been spending so many hours here, and kind of -
15 I think it has been, what, seven weeks of intensive review
16 for us to get to this point here, and our families, I have
17 kind of felt the effect of it, and I just kind of wanted to
18 say thank you to our families for understanding all of this
19 work that we have had to do, and I just wanted to say that
20 because they have dealt with so much, and our silo staff,
21 and I also wanted to thank BSA staff for their reviews on
22 our questions.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, Mary. I share that with
24 you.

25 MS. SPANO: Me, too. It has been long hours, but

1 I have to say we have quality staff at the BSA, and
2 everybody was up to the challenge and they never failed us,
3 kept going and going the more we wanted them.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: I am also very impressed with the
5 quality of work that my staff performed, it was just
6 amazing, and without their help we may not have been able to
7 meet today, it will have taken longer, of course. But I am
8 glad that it worked that way.

9 **Item 8. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda**

10 CHAIR AHMADI: With that, I think we can move on
11 to the next agenda item, which is the general public comment
12 session. So we would like to hear from the public.
13 Actually, since we do not have - yes, sir. No, that is
14 okay.

15 MR. VAN METER: We can do it in order.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: You are first. Will you state your
17 name, please, for the record?

18 MR. VAN METER: Right, thank you. Peter Van
19 Meter. First, congratulations to you for another excellent
20 meeting. You have done it in a very professional way. I
21 have been to a couple of these, and it is just very
22 impressive, and all the hard work that you are doing is very
23 much appreciated, and all those extra hours that you
24 referred to, very impressive activity.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

1 MR. VAN METER: I have a comment on the last
2 agenda item, plus an off-record comment, as well. Regarding
3 your review process, very very informative, what you went
4 through and the way you are thinking about reviewing these
5 applications and your comments on each one of those six, and
6 the things that you saw as important in the criteria and so
7 on. One of the things that emerged for me from your
8 comments was that it appears that you more or less have kind
9 of maybe two different kinds of Applicant strategies here.
10 In the limited space available, in each one of the essays,
11 it appears that maybe some Applicants may have chosen to
12 list a large number of activities or life experiences in
13 that limited space, and then perhaps, by implication, say
14 that these were demonstrating particular skills in each one
15 of those categories, they are meeting those particular
16 qualifications, when perhaps other Applicants may have
17 chosen to list only one or two examples, but in more of a
18 narrative or a story kind of a format. And that perhaps
19 leaves the challenge for the Panel to understand, well, was
20 that just one or two examples? And was there, maybe, more
21 examples that that Applicant has experienced that might
22 demonstrate their qualifications. Well, the candidate in
23 the first category of listing many activities perhaps,
24 again, through more implication that it would imply a
25 certain skill set, would then expect to have a more detailed

1 narrative examples be revealed during the interview process;
2 in other words, essentially saying, "I've done these dozen
3 different kinds of things and basically established my
4 qualifications." So that appears it might be a challenge
5 for the Panel to try to weigh those different kinds of
6 approaches together. Good luck.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, sir. It is a challenge.
8 Thank you.

9 MR. VAN METER: I am just hoping that both
10 approaches will be considered and thought about. Secondly,
11 in terms of just to comment on an item, and it is not on the
12 agenda, and it really was thought of it in the first remarks
13 today about doing searches for - somebody used the term
14 Google search - it made me think how wonderful it would be
15 if your IT people were able to put a key word "search"
16 applying to the database of the remaining Applicants, so
17 that the interested public could look for key words and say,
18 "Gee, I'd like to see how Applicants that come forth, you
19 know, with this key word," maybe of some particular
20 committee, or some particular activity, or whatever it might
21 be, and they could then have a list of the Applicants
22 returned from that key word search. Thank you.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, sir. Next, yes, please.

24 MR. LEVIN: Again, my name is Dan Levin and I am
25 an Applicant from Portola Valley, California. A great

1 challenge for those of us who are involved with diversity
2 work is not the philosophy, the philosophy is easy, it is
3 the action. What are you actually going to do to create a
4 more diverse workplace, to create a diverse redistricting
5 commission, whatever it is, and I was struck during your
6 conversation about Gracie Madrid, by something that I wanted
7 to reflect on briefly. First, I should say thank you very
8 much, this is obviously an extremely difficult process.
9 Everything about this process has been confidence inspiring,
10 the people who have been involved have been very impressive,
11 the transparency has been fabulous and much appreciated.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

13 MR. LEVIN: We are faced with an act which, on the
14 one hand, clearly describes the skills and abilities and
15 capabilities that the eventual pool of 60 most qualified
16 individuals must have, and on the other hand, it makes it
17 quite clear, especially in the selection process language,
18 that the intent is to create a Commission which is
19 representative of California's diversity, on many
20 dimensions. And yet, if you look at the statistics of this
21 pool of 600 people, while we are trending in a good
22 direction, we are not trending in quite the direction that
23 one might have hoped. And in particular, certain groups are
24 quite underrepresented in this pool, particularly the
25 Hispanic and Latino population, which has only about 10

1 percent of this pool, that represents closer to 37 percent
2 of our population, but that is not the only group that is
3 underrepresented on this list. As you were discussing Ms.
4 Madrid, I was struck by the fact that she failed, and I was
5 reading her application on my iPhone, thanks to technology,
6 she clearly failed in one particular section of the
7 application to cover a requirement, there can be no doubt,
8 she did not talk about geographic diversity, and yet, in all
9 other respects she appears to be quite an impressive
10 candidate. Moreover, she is representative of three
11 underrepresented groups, she is a woman, women are
12 underrepresented in this pool, she is a Latina, Latinos,
13 Mexican-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, are underrepresented
14 in this pool, and she lives in a geographic area which is
15 also underrepresented. And so my encouragement to you is to
16 think about the actions that you will take to ensure that
17 this pool is as diverse as it can be. And my personal
18 philosophy is quite simple with respect to this stuff, I am
19 going to hire the best candidate for the job. And I am
20 certain that you will select the best candidates that you
21 can for the pool of 60, but I will go out of my way to
22 ensure that the pool of candidates from which I hire is as
23 diverse as possible. I might reach out to the Society of
24 Black Engineers, I might go visit the Universities which
25 have a large diverse population, in an attempt to ensure

1 that the pool that I consider is as diverse as possible, and
2 then select the most qualified candidates from that pool. I
3 think you have that same discretion with respect to whom you
4 choose to interview, and in situations in which you have a
5 candidate who is so diverse in so many ways, but has failed
6 in one particular respect, to write the best application
7 they could possibly have written, I would encourage you to
8 consider interviewing them to understand in more detail
9 whether that missing piece is just a failure to write the
10 best application they could, or whether it is actually a
11 missing qualification. I do not mean to use her as a
12 particular example, I have no idea whether she is a great
13 candidate or not, but I do think we all need to try to do
14 what we can to make sure that this Commission, in the end,
15 represents the diversity of our State as effectively as
16 possible.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure.

18 MR. LEVIN: My final thought is, I was quite
19 surprised by this requirement to submit a Form 700 by July
20 12th, as I suppose you may find other Applicants are, as
21 well. My understanding was that I would not be required to
22 submit a Form 700 until quite a bit later in the process,
23 and many of us have carefully organized our summers so that
24 we will be out of town earlier in the summer, and around in
25 August when we might, with luck, be interviewed. I

1 personally will find it quite challenging to figure out how
2 to meet this deadline, given the complications of my travel
3 schedule, and you may find that other Applicants will, as
4 well. And if there is any room for flexibility there, it
5 would certainly be welcomed.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: I think - thanks so much. In
7 regards to your last comment, I just wanted to add something
8 that the Bureau is doing the best we can in terms of making
9 the interviews as flexible as possible. I think we are now
10 working on a system that allows individuals themselves to
11 set up their own schedules, so I hope that comes up soon and
12 that will probably be helpful. But at the same time, I
13 wanted to share, as you may know, we ourselves are facing
14 the deadlines and the law requires us to get this done by
15 September 30th, or October 1st, so we have to have tight
16 deadlines and do our best to be as flexible as possible.
17 But thanks for your comments, appreciate it.

18 MR. LEVIN: Of course.

19 MS. SPANO: Thank you.

20 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Do we have any other comments?

22 Yes, please. Please state your name for the record.

23 MR. WRIGHT: Good afternoon. I am Jim Wright. I
24 am a voter from San Jose. I came here with one suggestion
25 for you and now I have got three.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

2 MR. WRIGHT: Mary, I will start with you.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay.

4 MR. WRIGHT: Your comments about impartiality and
5 the political aspects and so on, do you equate impartial
6 with apolitical?

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Is that something that I can
8 answer?

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You certainly can, it may
10 be case-by-case, I do not know.

11 MR. WRIGHT: Would you comment on -

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Since counsel says that I am
13 able to comment, no, they do not have to be apolitical, as
14 long as - because within the Regulations, it says, you know,
15 they can have views, but as long as they are able to show
16 that they can set aside those views and be impartial about
17 the work that they are doing, so that is what I am looking
18 for.

19 MR. WRIGHT: I put this perhaps in the context of
20 a couple of interactions I have had with Steven Russo in
21 setting the Regulations, where I am rather strong on
22 eliminating anyone who has had a party political activity in
23 the past because I feel that they are tainted and should not
24 get into the Commission. The whole intent of this
25 Commission is to do redistricting without political

1 influence, so eliminating possible political influence, in
2 my opinion, is something that you guys should probably focus
3 on, at least in a minor way. Okay, number two, in watching
4 you for the last four hours, I hope you have got good
5 chiropractors because -

6 CHAIR AHMADI: My back hurts.

7 MR. WRIGHT: -- just going back and forth and so
8 on, may I suggest the next session you hold like this, you
9 put the tables a little bit in kind of a U?

10 CHAIR AHMADI: We actually thought about that
11 yesterday.

12 MR. WRIGHT: I hope you all survive and not have
13 any problems. The third is that I would like to suggest an
14 agenda item for you for a future meeting, and that is to
15 discuss the forum, the mechanism in which you will perform
16 the interviews with the candidates. For example, if you
17 have a candidate that is standing at the podium here, and
18 you are sitting way over there behind the tables, that is
19 one of the formats that you may use for it, and you are a
20 long ways away. An alternative might be to have you, the
21 three of you and the candidate, seated around a round table
22 where you can look at each other in the eye and really get
23 to know each other and get a good measure of the individual.
24 I am very much interested in hearing you discuss that in a
25 future meeting and I have a little document that I put

1 together with a couple of my thoughts on it.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: The Secretary, you can take that,
3 please.

4 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you very much, you are doing a
5 great job.

6 MS. SPANO: Thank you.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you again. Do we have any
9 other comments, questions, from members of the public?
10 Seeing that there is none, I just want to make one last
11 announcement that, you know, during the last few weeks, as
12 Mary stated, we have worked very hard. The Bureau has been
13 very supportive of our work and I wanted to thank every
14 single one, especially Elaine Howell, the State Auditor, who
15 provided us tremendous support, both in terms of
16 administrative support and logistics. And we had staff
17 members who were assigned just to focus to help us, and I
18 appreciate that, who I just wanted to thank. And the
19 decisions that we made in the last few weeks were not easy,
20 these were difficult decisions and we tried to justify the
21 decision-making based on those requirements that are stated
22 in the law. But, again, I just wanted to mention this, that
23 because you are being eliminated or excluded from the pool
24 does not mean that you are not talented. I want to thank
25 every single Applicant who took the time and provided

1 application for this very important historic occasion for
2 the State of California. That tells me a lot about their
3 personalities, their intent, and I appreciate the fact that
4 they have taken the time to do that, but just because you
5 are excluded now, it means that, you know, for the good of
6 California, the decision has to be made in a way that
7 identifies the most qualified candidates for this important
8 task. So I just wanted to thank everybody who took part in
9 this important process.

10 And with that, I think our meeting adjourns for
11 today. Thank you very much.

12 [Adjourned at 12:01 P.M.]

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